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PIONEERS OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

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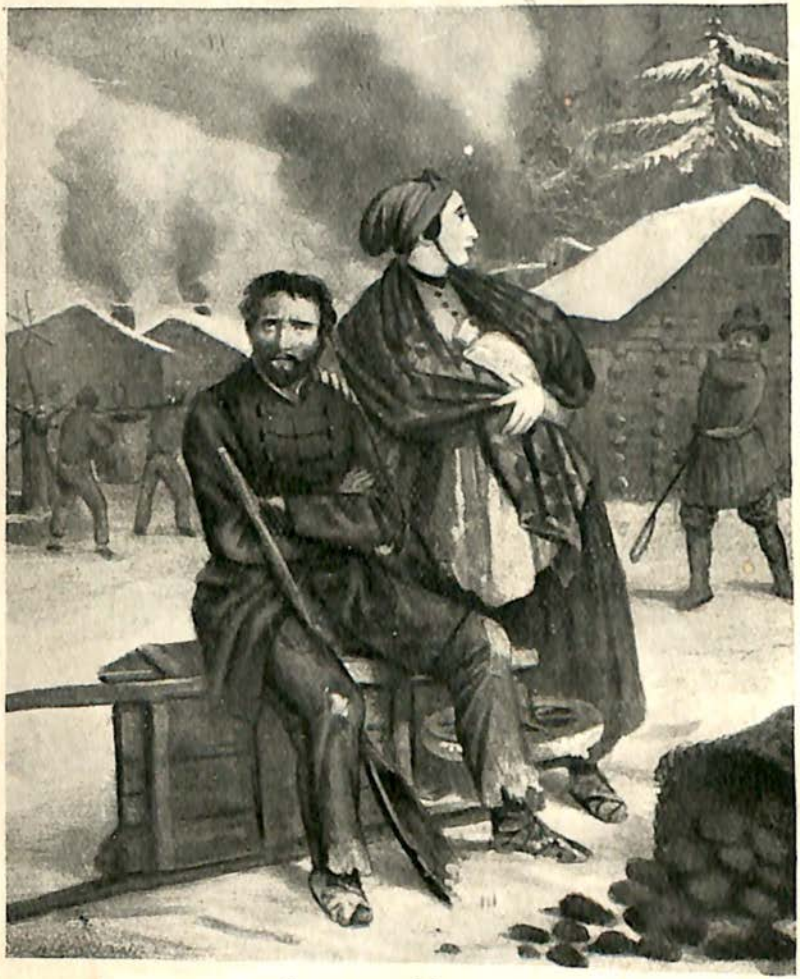
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SIBERIAN EXILES.

Frontispiece

PIONEERS OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

BY

DR. ANGELO S. RAPPOPORT

32648

LONDON
STANLEY PAUL & CO
31 ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.2

First published in 1919

PREFACE

PAR CÉLÉSTIN DEMBLON,
Député de Liège, Professeur aux Universités de Bruxelles et Rennes

It is the hour for souls!
ELIZABETH BROWNING ("Aurora Leigh").

QUAND mon ami le Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport voulait bien me demander une préface pour *The Pioneers of the Russian Revolution*, j'en fus non moins surpris qu'heureux. Surpris de devoir apporter de l'eau à la rivière: qu'ajouterait ma prose à la nouvelle œuvre et à la renommée d'un écrivain depuis longtemps déjà connu par des livres nombreux.

Mais je fus heureux, en lisant son manuscrit, de pouvoir communier une fois de plus dans ce monde enchanté de l'histoire socialiste qui fut, avec les lettres et les arts, le ravissement de ma vie. Toute ma jeunesse et ses ardentes illusions sont revenues m'envelopper, plus délicieuses que jamais, comme un transport magique! Comment remercier le Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport de m'avoir à ce point rendu ce que Baudelaire appelle "les heures de visitation"? Mais si son livre m'a replongé dans une fontaine de Jouvence, ce n'est pas un Léthé qui ne laisse que la mémoire du plaisir: serait-

il juste et souhaitable d'ailleurs qu'on oubliat d'indicibles souffrances pour n'en garder que le fruit ? La foi de toute ma vie m'est réapparue, ravivée à travers la double vision horrible des maux qu'a soufferts la grande Russie de Nicolas Tourgeniev, de Dostoievski, d'Alexandre Herzen, de Lavrov, de Michel Bakounine, de Tschernyshevski, de Mikhailov, de Tolstoï et de tant d'autres —et à travers la désespérante tragédie que le monde traverse à cette heure.

Désespérant si l'on ne voyait qu'elle. Les épreuves subies par les révolutionnaires russes ont parfois été horribles, je répète le mot ; mais elles n'incitaient pas au découragement—loin de là ! Un penseur a dit que l'histoire interdit de désespérer ; et ce fut toujours le sentiment de l'auteur de ces lignes. Qu'on lui permette de rappeler qu'il n'a pas reculé non plus devant la persécution : proscrit de longues années dans sa propre patrie, pour le crime de l'avoir rêvée plus heureuse et plus belle, et mieux chérie dans le mirage de l'universelle solidarité, il fut en outre peu aimé de ce chef même par maints tard venus à fausses convictions ravageant sans vergogne la moisson qui avait si durement fait lever pour tous ! Il n'en parlerait même pas, s'il ne s'agissait que de lui. Gloire à certaines dupes ! . . . L'apostolat et la philosophie véritables requirèrent d'imperturbables indulgences —l'on sait dans quels cas le silence est grand, puisque chacun agit en somme par de lointaines procurations. . . . Sans doute, si nous avions assez de grandeur d'âme, perspicacité, d'énergie et de délicatesse, nous devrions encore demander pardon des maux que l'on nous fait ; mais ceux-mêmes qui doivent se réjouir avec mélancolie de leur

destinée et qu'une amertume trop égoïste n'a jamais troublé, débordent aujourd'hui d'amertumes parce qu'il ne s'agit plus d'eux exclusivement. A qui la respecte, il est même interdit de rappeler à d'autres que "l'union sacrée" n'a rien de commun avec la trahison sournoise et de bon rapport. . . . Interdit avant la fin des hostilités !

En l'attendant, quelle âpre consolation de revivre une fois de plus le rêve de sa jeunesse ! Le livre du Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport m'a causé une double joie mélancolique: J'ai revu les images aimées de ma vie d'intimités et de luttes au vieux pays de Liège, Wallonie, dans la Belgique entière; j'ai revu dans leur prestige habituel les chères ombres de Morelly, de Mably, de Rousseaux, de Babeuf, de St. Simon, d'Owen, de Fourier, de Cabet, de Proudhon, de Bakounine et de Lassalle, de Benoit Malon et de maints autres; et, j'ai souffert—soit dit sans nulle intention de reproche !—de n'y avoir pu voir se lever aussi, dans leurs auréoles familières et dans un monde de souvenirs, les ombres de l'admirable et cher César De Pape, dont le fils vient de tomber sur le sol belge qu'il n'avait pas fui quoi qu'il ne fût pas mandataire public, de César De Pape, le père illustre du socialisme belge et l'un des pères de la première Internationale, de César De Pape, à qui Malon lui-même dédié en termes si flatteusement significatifs son *Socialism Intégral;* d'Edmond Von Beveren, l'aimant apôtre de Gand, créateur avec Anseele et les autres de l'incomparable Co-opérative *Le Vooruit*, de l'athlète bruxellois Jean Volders, d'Oscar Beck et de Joseph Demoulin, ces dignes figures liègoises dont j'ai écrit la vie, du noble et savant Hector Denis, qui jeta sur le Parlement belge un éclat sublime de

1894 à 1913, de Jaurès et d'Edouard Vaillant. . . . D'autres encore !

Mais puisque j'évoque surtout ici les pures mémoires récentes de notre infortunée et glorieuse Belgique, si étrangement méconnue encore, bien que l'horrible invasion l'ait surprise en plein âge d'or littéraire, je dois saluer aussi une figure géante, d'une originalité profonde, ne tenant que par certains côtés aux idées des précedents, bien qu'il ait dit que " la société moderne porte le socialisme dans ses flancs et que de gré ou de force il faudra qu'elle accouche," mais le premier orateur qu'avec Alphonse de Lamartine ait eu l'Europe au dix-neuvième siècle tout entier, et, faut-il le dire ? le seul grand parmi tant de remarquables qu'ait jamais eu la Belgique : Paul Janson, le colosse pathétique et foudroyant aux inimitables accents qu'il faut mettre à côté de Bossuet et de Mirabeau, de même que Rubens à côté de Michel-Ange et de Titien. . . .

Comme celui d'Auguste, notre âge d'or possède un Cicéron !

Telle est dans le domaine social, l'émouvante lignée qu'indirectement ou directement me rappelle le livre du Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport ! J'en viens maintenant à la seconde joie mélancolique qu'il m'a donnée : réconforter par le tableau de l'heroïsme des révolutionnaires russes. En fut-il jamais de pareil ? L'Europe occidentale n'ignorait certes pas l'histoire de ce martyrologe depuis les jours de la " grande " Catherine jusqu'à nous, mais il est bien peu de personnes à qui le livre du Dr. Rappoport n'apprendra beaucoup de choses encore. Quel cortège de souffrances ! quelle abnégation ! quelle ténacité !

Et—par contraste—quelle lâche et criminelle indifférence des nations dites civilisées à l'égard de tels martyrs ! Souvent j'ai dû suspendre ma lecture, n'ayant plus la force de continuer. La seule consolation que j'aie éprouvée c'est de n'avoir du moins jamais été complice par mon silence de ces horreurs—et de les avoir tant de fois flétries dans des meetings de protestation organisés dans ce but unique à cette déjà vieille Populaire de Liège qu'avec une trentaine d'amis je fondais en 1887, ou bien à Verviers, dans le Hainaut, à Bruxelles, ailleurs encore ! La conscience est tout. Que devient la vie sans elle ? Dut-on rester presque seul, comme trop souvent en ces jours infâmes, il en faut pas craindre de souffrir toujours davantage, pourvu qu'on n'ait pas la honte d'une prudence ou d'une faiblesse indignes : aucun effort d'idéal n'est perdu pour l'avenir ! Plus les âmes nobles souffrent à cette heure, plus leurs souffrances sont du moins exemptes du remords d'avoir une responsabilité dans l'horrible cataclysme—ou d'avoir poussé, de loin, des infortunés à peine sortis de l'enfance dans les champs de carnage ! . . . Ah ! qu'a cette heure où les âmes nobles et sincères se mêlent plus que jamais dans les angoisses de la tormente tragique, qu'il soit permis, devant le public de cette Angleterre qu'il a toujours aimée à la passion, qu'il soit permis à quelqu'un qui représente depuis vingt-quatre ans au Parlement belge Liège la ville-martyre, qu'il a de son mieux soutenue pendant les jours du siège effroyable, d'apporter un témoignage de plus en faveur des sentiments élevés de la conscience russe ! Depuis une trentaine d'années, il a vu les nombreuses et successives colonies

d'étudiants slaves inscrits à l'Université de Liège, se presser avec ardeur dans nos meetings de solidarité comme au sein de nos immenses manifestations à travers la vieille cité de Charlemagne, d'Henri de Dinant, de Régnier, de Bassenge, de Lombard, de Gérard de Lairesse, de Carlier, de Grétry et de César Frank ; il en a chaque année retrouvé beaucoup d'autres à l'Université Nouvelle de Bruxelles dont certains comptent aujourd'hui dans les rangs révolutionnaires de leur patrie : les nombreux souvenirs que ces étudiants et étudiantes ont laissés dans cette capitale de la Wallonie, qui est en même temps la capitale industrielle de la Belgique, et que l'auteur de ces lignes ne peut évoquer aujourd'hui de sang froid, sont comme autant d'apparitions d'attendrissement et de reconfort ! Nul plus que lui n'a foi dans la Russie. Qu'il lui soit permis de rappeler à ce propos la véritable crise d'enthusiasme qui saisit Liège, ville essentiellement musicale, pour les compositeurs russes des 1886 : les nombreux concerts organisés et l'exécution retentissante à la salle de fêtes de l'Emulation (l'auteur présent) de la symphonie *Dans les Steppes* d'Alexandre Borofine —qui mourut, comme on sait, dans notre ville. Délicieuses et poignantes visions qui me reviennent mêlées de toutes parts dans ce qu'un poète anglais appelle le charme fatal du passé ! Hélas ! je dois me contenir et, pour une autre raison qu'Hamlet, m'écrier avec lui : " But break, my heart ; for I must hold my tongue ! "

Je ne veux pas résumer ici le tableau que trace Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport. Même courte, se serait une superfétation—qui affaiblirait ce que chacun va lire.

Mais quelques points méritent d'être signalés.

D'abord—pour laisser quant de judicieuses réflexions et des jugements de véritable historien auxquels tous les lecteurs souscriront, par exemple aux pages 5 à 8, 10 et 11, 17 et 18, dans le seul premier chapitre!—je me permets d'attirer tout spécialement l'attention sur l'exactitude avec laquelle Dr. Rappoport parle à la page 27 de l'Internationale "sans être un collectiviste ni un socialiste; bien qu'il admette maints principes de la doctrine socialiste."

Autre point digne de la plus minutieuse attention du lecteur à l'heure où se déroulent en Rüssie des événements que saisit d'autant moins le public occidental que l'existence de la censure n'a pas peu contribué à les obscurcir encore: en lisant la fin du chapitre II à partir de la page 33, on saisira avec toute la netteté désirable la profonde différence existant entre la Révolution russe de 1917 et la Révolution française de 1789. Nul n'était mieux qualifié pour la résumer que le Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport qui connait à fond la France et la Russie—ce résumé n'est-il pas d'ailleurs la suite logique et le couronnement élargi de l'excellent précis, *History of Russia*, qu'il nous avait déjà donné en 1907. Les assimilations—ou les parallèles à la Plutarque—qu'on a lus parfois dans nos journaux, ne méritent trop souvent qu'un sourire. L'échec rélatif de 1905 impliquait la chute du Tzarisme de 1917, quels que soient les excès momentanés qui en résultent. Je me rappelle ce que me dis tranquillement en 1905 à l'Université Nouvelle de Bruxelles l'illustre et regretté géographe qui avait nom Elisée Reclus: "C'est la plus grande révolution du monde. — La

plus profonde, répondis-je. — C'est la même chose dans ma pensée," riposta Reclus. Les pages du Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport font toucher du doigt la vérité de cette double observation.

Je voudrais signaler encore les pages consacrées à Lavrov et à Bakounine, en exprimant le vœu que l'auteur des *Pioneers of the Russian Revolution* élargisse le champ dont il s'est emparé avec tant de maîtrise, en nous donnant une étude complémentaire sur le rôle social de Nicolas Gogol, de Tourguénev, de Théodore Dostoievski, de Léon Tolstoï, de Maxime Gorki, etc. Ce serait une sorte de pendant à l'ouvrage exclusivement littéraire où peu s'en faut de Melchior de Vogué. J'ai toujours été et je reste un fanatique intransigeant de la doctrine de l'art ; mais enfin puisque les grands romanciers russes ont voulu confondre plus ou moins le domaine littéraire avec le social, j'aime naturellement à bien voir en quoi ils ont influencé l'évolution politique—ou du moins en quoi ils l'ont exprimée, Goethe disant avec raison, pensé je : " L'homme croit qu'il pousse et il est poussé."

Oui, je voudrais que le Dr. A. S. Rappoport s'ancrât par droit de conquête dans le domaine *entier* qu'il peut désormais explorer mieux que personne—et qu'on pût lui appliquer ici ce que mon cher Savage Landor dit si bien du grand Geoffrey Chaucer :

> " No man hath walk'd along our roads with step
> So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue
> So varied in discourse."

Nul passage du livre du Dr. Rappoport ne m'a frappé que les pages finales, si neuves je crois et si

remarquables, qu'il a consacrées aux Juifs de Russie et d'ailleurs. J'y applaudis d'autant plus qu'en 1903, dans une brochure publiée en Belgique, je disais toute mon admiration pour la petite race fameuse qui nous a donné Baruch Spinoza, le bien-aimé Jacques ou Jacob Ruysdael, Henri Heine, Felix Mendelssohn, et tant d'autres—et dont à Liège un des plus généreux représentants, homme d'une simplicité admirable, M. Montefiore-Levi, qui fut jusqu'à sa mort assez récente le plus populaire et le plus vénéré de nos sénateurs, et qui nous vint d'Angleterre vers 1880, a fondé, comme une seconde Université, son vaste Institut électrotechnique offert à l'Etat, sans compter nombre d'institutions de bienfaisance dans la région entière. L'histoire anglaise a d'ailleurs enregistré les actes de munificence d'autres membres de la famille de M. Montefiore-Levi—et l'on verra dans le présent livre quelle fut la fière attitude d'un Rothschild en face du tzar Alexandre II en faveur d'Alexandre Herzen.

Les pages finales, développées et fort pénétrantes, couronnent dignement le beau livre du Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport. J'en voudrais discuter un seul point, si la place ne me faisait défaut. Bien que l'auteur de *Pioneers of the Russian Revolution* proteste avec autant de raison que de sincerité de son respect pour Shakespeare—c'est à dire aux yeux du signataire de ces lignes pour Lord Rutland-Shakespeare—je crois que l'immortel poète du *Marchand de Venise* qui commença ce chef-d'œuvre en 1597 loin de sa patrie, pendant son séjour à l'Université de Padoue, n'a pas été aussi sévère, au fond que le pense Dr. Rappoport, l'époque étant donnée, pour ce terrible Shylock qui rappelle sans

doute l'infortuné R. Lopez exécuté à Londres en 1594, et auquel se mêle un ressouvenir du Barabas dressé en 1589 par Christophe Marlowe dans son *Juif de Malte*. Oui, qu'on songe à l'époque, et qu'on relise de près l'une des merveilles du théâtre de "Shakespeare"—et qu'on n'oublie point la charmante figure de Jessica, la fille de Shylock: on saisira tout au moins bien des circonstances atténuantes! . . . Mais je m'arrête. Une discussion historico-littéraire entraînerait trop loin, et hors du sujet. Au fond, il ne s'agit d'ailleurs ici que d'un détail. Ce serait abuser de la patience du lecteur que d'allonger encore, pour prendre une image à Lewis Théobald, que les violentes attaques de Pope n'empêchent point d'avoir été le plus consciencieux peut-être des commentateurs Shakespeariens, que d'allonger encore cet étroit couloir obscur qui mène à l'édifice lumineux—où chacun pouvait fort bien entrer de plein pied; mais l'auteur de ce livre, à qui je dois de ce chef des remerciements, a voulu qu'en ces jours d'internationale communion tragique, un Belge pût proclamer, si faiblement que ce soit, son culte ardent pour la race et le pays de naissance du Dr. A. S. Rappoport.

CÉLÉSTIN DEMBLON.

PARIS,
20 *Mai* 1918.

TRANSLATION OF PREFACE

By Célestin Demblon
Député de Liège, Professeur aux Universités de Bruxelles et Rennes

It is the hour for souls!
Elizabeth Browning ("Aurora Leigh").

When my friend Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport asked me to write a preface to *The Pioneers of the Russian Revolution*, my delight was almost equalled by my surprise. Surprise that I should be asked to carry water to the river; to add my prose to the latest work, and to the renown, of this well-known writer, author of so many successful books.

But I was happy when I read his manuscript, happy to be able once more to enter that enchanted world of socialistic history which, with literature and the arts, has always been the great pleasure of my life. My youth, with all its ardent illusions, more gracious even than before, seemed to sweep over me again, like a magic transformation. How can I thank Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport for having thus given me what Baudelaire called "an hour of visitation"? But if his book plunged me once again into the fountain of youth, it does not act on one as do the waters of Lethe and leave behind it only the memory of pleasure: would it in any case be desirable or just that one should forget such indescribable sufferings and merely remember their result, their fruit? The faith of my life again loomed up before me, revivified by the terrible

picture of the sorrows suffered by the Russia of Nicholas Tourgeniev, Dostoievski, Alexander Herzen, Lavrov, Michel Bakounine, Tschernyshevski, Mikhailov, Tolstoi and of many others—and of the disheartening tragedy through which the world is at present passing.

Disheartening, if one's view is solely bounded by it. The sufferings endured by the Russian revolutionaries were sometimes terrible, I repeat the word, but they did not tend to discouragement—far from it. A thinker has said that history forbids despair; such is also the belief of the writer of these lines. He may be permitted to remember that he also did not flinch under persecution: outlawed for many years in his own country for the crime of visualising it happier, more desirable and more honoured in the mirage of international solidarity, on this account also he was but little liked by the adherents of the later false tenets that ravaged, without shame, the harvest that had been so hardly sown for all. He would not even speak of it, if it affected only himself. All hail to certain dupes! . . .

True apostleship and philosophy demand imperturbable patience—one knows that in some cases silence is the great thing, since each acts, in effect, upon such distant procurations. . . . Doubtless if we were sufficiently great of soul and had enough perspicacity, energy and tact, we would demand pardon of the evils done to us; but even those who should rejoice, though sadly, at their fate and whom a too egotistical bitterness has never troubled, to-day overflow with bitterness, because it is no longer a question of themselves alone. It is even forbidden to remind others that the "union sacrée" has nothing in common with crafty, productive treachery. . . . Forbidden before the close of hostilities!

In the meantime, what a bitter consolation to re-live again the dream of one's youth! Dr. Angelo S.

Rappoport's book has given me a double melancholic joy. I have seen again the dearly loved pictures of my life of friendship and struggles in the old country of Liège, Walloon, in all Belgium; I have seen again the dear shades, with all their accustomed fascination, of Mably, Rousseau, Babeuf, St. Simon, Owen, Feurier, Cabet, Proudhon, Bakounine and Lassalle, of Benoit Malon and of many others; and I have suffered—it is said without any inflection of reproach!—at not being able to see also in this world of memories the shades of the dear and admirable Cæsar de Pape, whose son has just fallen on Belgian soil which he had not abandoned though he was not a public proxy, of Cæsar de Pape, the illustrious father of Belgian socialism and one of the founders of the original Internationale, of Cæsar de Pape to whom Malon himself dedicated in such significant flattering terms his *Integral Socialism*; of Edmund von Beveren, the devoted adherent of Gand, founder, with Anseele and others, of the incomparable Co-operative *Le Vooruit*, of the athletic Jean Volders of Brussels, of Oscar Beck and Joseph Demoulin, those worthy sons of Liège whose lives I have written, of the noble and learned Hector Denis, who gave to the Belgian Parliament a wonderful brilliancy from 1894 to 1913, of Jaurès and Edouard Vaillant. . . . Many others still!

But since here I am only evoking recent memories of our unfortunate and glorious Belgium, still so strangely misunderstood, although the horrible invasion surprised her in the days of her golden age of literature, I must also hail a giant gifted with a profound originality who only on certain points holds to the ideas of his predecessors, although he has said that "modern society carries socialism in her womb and either by agreement or by force she will be compelled to give it birth." The finest orator, with Alphonse de Lamartine, that Europe has had during the entire nineteenth century and, is it necessary to

say it? the only great man, among so many remarkable men, that Belgium has ever had: Paul Janson, the pathetic and fulminating Colossus of the inimitable speech whom one must rank with Bossuet and Mirabeau just as one ranks Rubens with Michel Angelo and Titian. . . .

Like that of Augustus, our golden age possesses a Cicero!

Such are, in the sociological domain, the moving memories that, directly or indirectly, Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport's book brings back to my mind. I come now to the second melancholy joy that he has given me: consolation from the picture of the heroism of the Russian revolutionaries. Was there ever anything like it? Occidental Europe was certainly not ignorant of the history of this martyrology from the days of the "great" Catherine until our time, but there are very few people who will not learn a great deal from Dr. Rappoport's book. What a procession of suffering! What abnegation! What tenacity!

And by contrast, what cowardly and criminal indifference the so-called civilised nations showed such martyrs! Often I was compelled to stop reading, not having the power to continue! My only consolation was that, at least, I have never by my silence been a party to these horrors, but have many, many times spoken against them at meetings of protest, organised for this sole purpose, at the now old Populaire of Liège which, with the aid of thirty friends, I founded in 1887, or at Verviers, Hainaut, Brussels and elsewhere. The conscience is everything! What would life become without it? Even if one must stand practically alone, as too often happens in these infamous days, one must not fear to suffer more and more, provided always that one has not the shame of unworthy prudence and weakness: no struggle for the ideal is lost for the future! The more noble souls suffer to-day, the more free are their sufferings from the remorse

of having been in any way responsible for the terrible cataclysm—or of having, even indirectly, thrust the poor lads, hardly out of their adolescence, into the fields of carnage! . . . Ah, at this hour, when all noble and sincere souls suffer more deeply than ever the anguish of the tragic storm, it may be permitted one who has always loved England passionately, one who for twenty-four years represented in the Belgian Parliament the martyr-city of Liège, which he also did his best to sustain and enhearten during the awful days of the siege, to bear witness before the English public, to the high ideal of the Russian conscience. For thirty years he has seen numerous and successive colonies of Slav students at the University of Liège ardently take part in our meetings on solidarity, as also in our immense manifestations in the old city of Charlemagne, Henri de Dinant, Régnier, Bassenge, Lombard, Gérard de Lairesse, Carlier, Grétry and of César Frank: and each year he came across many others at the New University of Brussels, several of whom now hold high positions in the ranks of the revolutionaries in their country: the many memories of these boy and girl students in the Walloon capital (it is also the industrial capital of Belgium), which the writer of these lines cannot to-day recall without emotion, are like so many apparitions of compassion and consolation. No one has greater faith in Russia than he! It may be permitted in this connection, to recall the veritable orgy of enthusiasm for the Russian composers that swept Liège, essentially a musical city, in 1886; the numerous concerts organised and the wonderful playing in the festival hall of the Emulation, in the presence of its composer, of the symphony *In the Steppes*, by Alexander Borofine —who died, as is well known, in this city. Delightful and poignant memories that come back to me, mingled with what an English poet calls the fatal charm of the past! *Hélas*, I must restrain myself and, though

for a different cause, say with Hamlet: "But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue."

I do not wish to recapitulate here the picture of events with which Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport has dealt. No matter how short, it would be an excrescence—that would weaken a book everyone will desire to read.

But several points deserve to be noted. Firstly, apart from the many judicious reflections and truly historical judgments with which all readers will agree, for example on pages 5–8, 10 and 11, 17 and 18, in the first chapter alone—I take upon myself to call special attention to the exactitude with which Dr. Rappoport speaks, on page 27, of the tenets of Internationalism: "I am neither a collectivist nor a socialist, even though I approve of many of the principles of the socialistic doctrines."

Another point worthy of the reader's close attention, especially to-day when events are taking place in Russia that the occidental public will find the less easy to understand now that the existence of the censorship has tended to obscure them; after reading the conclusion of chapter II, from page 33, anyone will understand, with all desirable clearness, the profound difference that exists between the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the French Revolution of 1789.

No one was better qualified to write this review than Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport, who knows both France and Russia so thoroughly. Again, is not this book the logical sequel to, and the crown in an extended form, of that excellent *Short History of Russia* which he gave us in 1907? The comparisons, or the parallels *à la* Plutarch, that one reads now and then in the papers too often evoke nothing but a smile. The relative failure of 1905 involved the fall of Tsarism in 1917, whatever were the momentary resulting extremes. I remember well what the illustrious and sincerely regretted geographer Elisée Reclus quite calmly said to me at the New University of Brussels in 1905:

"This is the greatest revolution the world has ever seen!" "The most profound," I answered. "It is the same thing as I see it," he replied. The book of Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport proves the truth of these remarks.

I would also draw attention to the pages devoted to Lavrov and Bakounine, and at the same time express my hope that the author of *The Pioneers of the Russian Revolution* will enlarge the field of his operations, which he handles with such mastery and skill, and give us a complementary study of the social work of Nicolas Gogol, Tourguenev, Theodore Dostoievski, Leon Tolstoi, Maxim Gorki, etc. I have always been, and shall be always, an uncompromising fanatic regarding the doctrines of art, but since the great Russian novelists have deliberately more or less intermingled the literary with the social, naturally I like to see how they have influenced the political evolution—or at least how they have expressed it, for I agree with Goethe that "Man believes he pushes, but is himself pushed."

Yes, I should like Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport to firmly take possession, by right of conquest, of that entire domain which he can explore better than anyone else, for one can well apply to him the words my dear Savage Landor spoke of the great Geoffrey Chaucer:

> "No man hath walk'd along our roads with step
> So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue
> So varied in discourse."

No passage in Dr. Rappoport's book struck me more forcibly than his final pages; they seemed to me so original, so remarkable. I appreciated them the more since in a pamphlet published in 1903 I expressed my admiration of the famous little race that has given us Baruch Spinoza, the well-loved Jacques or Jacob Ruysdael, Heinrich Heine, Felix Mendelssohn and so many others; and at Liège one of its most generous representatives, M. Montefiore-Levi, a man of great

singleness of purpose, who until his comparatively recent death was one of the most popular and most respected of our senators; who came to us from England about 1880 and founded, among numerous other benevolent institutions spread throughout the entire region, his vast Electro-technical Institute as a second university which he offered to the State. England also has recorded many generous gifts on the part of other members of the family of M. Montefiore-Levi, and in this book one can read of the proud attitude taken by a Rothschild towards Tsar Alexander II on behalf of Alexander Herzen.

The final pages, well thought out and deeply moving, crown worthily Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport's fine book. I would dispute but one point if my space permits. Though the author of *The Pioneers of the Russian Revolution* proclaims with as much reason as sincerity his respect for Shakespeare—that is to say, in the opinion of the writer of these lines, Lord Rutland-Shakespeare—I believe that the immortal poet of *The Merchant of Venice*, who began that masterpiece far from his own country, during his sojourn at the University of Padua, was not in reality as severe as Dr. Rappoport thinks, when you consider the epoch in which it was written, on the terrible Shylock, who, doubtless, was modelled on the unfortunate R. Lopez, executed in London in 1594, mingled with memories of the Barabbas drawn in 1589 by Christopher Marlowe in his *Jew of Malta*. Yes, when one thinks of that epoch and re-reads one of the marvels of Shakespeare—and one does not forget the charming figure of Jessica, Shylock's daughter—one will realise more or less various attenuating circumstances.

But I must close. An historical-literary discussion would lead one too far and too wide of one's subject. In reality also, here it is but a detail. It would be abusing the patience of the reader to continue, to borrow an idea from Lewis Theobald, who, despite

the violent attacks of Pope, was perhaps the most conscientious of Shakespearian commentators, to continue along this narrow, obscure path that leads to the luminous edifice, where everyone can easily and equally enter; but the author of this book, to whom I owe many thanks, desired in these days of tragic international communion that a Belgian should proclaim, poorly it may be, his ardent sympathy with the race and country of birth of Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport.

CÉLÉSTIN DEMBLON.

PARIS,
May 20, 1918.

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PIONEERS OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

CHAPTER I

PARIS AND PETROGRAD

Evolution and Revolution

Numerous comparisons and parallels have been drawn between the French Revolutions of 1789 and 1793 and the Russian upheaval—not only of 1917 but also of 1905. In my opinion, however, all these parallels, at the best, are merely superficial. The French and the Russian Revolutions have only this in common—that they effected a change. And this result they share with all other revolutions. But when one considers the ideas struggling in the background of these changes, the deeper causes underlying the upheavals, their psychology and tendencies, one realises that the French Revolutions of 1789 and 1793 differ widely from the Russian of 1917, both in cause and effect. I deliberately say 1917, for the movement of 1905 in Russia cannot scientifically be called a revolution. Of course there was an attempt to bring about one, but a mere attempt to bring about changes is not a revolution.

What is a Revolution, and what are the manifestations—natural, religious, political, social, literary, etc.—to which the name of "revolution" may justly be applied? "Revolutions," writes a modern sociologist, "are changes, either *attempted* or *realised* by force, in the constitution of societies."[1] This conception of the idea of revolution, opposed as it is to the definitions given by more ancient economists and sociologists, such as Proudhon, Chateaubriand, John Stuart Mill, Bluntschli, Réclus and others, seems to me to be erroneous. An attempt which has failed, which has not been realised, cannot be considered a positive quantity and is hardly to be compared with a transformation, or a change, which is a *fait-accompli*. Thus many attempts, accompanied by violence, many political troubles, which fail and effect no change whatsoever, are mere insurrections, revolts, but not revolutions. In a word, a revolution is a "change, a radical transformation." Thus the movements of 1789 and 1917 were revolutions, but those of June 1848 and March 1871 were not.

"A revolution is a change of government brought about by force," wrote John Stuart Mill in his letter of October 14th, 1872, addressed to the Committee of the International Working Men's Association.[2] If, however, by revolution we understand an accomplished fact, a transformation, a radical change, such a change need not always be accompanied by violence. Indeed, one of the many erroneous ideas still prevalent, not only among the masses, but also among economists and sociologists, is the belief that a revolution must

[1] Cf. Bauer, *Essai sur les Révolutions*, Paris, 1908, p. 11.
[2] See Block, *Dictionnaire de Politique*, s.v. Révolution.

necessarily be accompanied by bombs, dynamite, bloodshed and violence of all sorts. Thus, John Stuart Mill considered violence as a *sine qua non* of revolution, and many modern authors do not seem able to conceive a revolution, political or social, without violence and the employment of armed force. To this idea I cannot subscribe, for radical, far-reaching changes can be effected without any form of violence.

Again, it is not usually the revolutionary who is anxious to use violence; he is compelled to do so by the counter revolution, by the opposition of those who are adverse to any form of change, by those who employ armed force to quell any attempts at change. The violence accompanying revolutions is not usually the fault of the revolutionaries, of the liberals, men eager for innovation and amelioration, but of the opposing conservative classes who are anxious to hold the power they have usurped, and therefore call to their aid traditionalism, conservatism, order and law. But the world has witnessed many revolutions, many radical changes which have been accomplished in a peaceful manner; long-existing ideas and conceptions have been uprooted, though they were consecrated by tradition and time, though men had grown accustomed to look upon them as impregnable, as the citadels of all human belief, as immutable institutions. For a day always comes when man laughs at the idols he has created, has taught himself to adore and to venerate, and then —they crumble and fall to the earth.

These are true revolutions, for they radically change human thought and convictions. Need they necessarily be accompanied by violence?

Need bloodshed and bomb-throwing be their corollaries? Were not Archimedes and Newton, Galilei and Copernic, Darwin and Edison, Watt and Arkwright revolutionary in their teaching and inventions? They revolutionised society and its conceptions. Christianity and Buddhism have wrought the greatest change in the domain of thought and religious conceptions—they have revolutionised humanity, altering and shaping the conduct and aims of the greater portion of the human race. Yet neither the teachings of Christianity nor of Buddhism harbour any ideas of violence.

I admit that certain revolutions have meant violence and bloodshed, and have led to much useless destruction, but that was not the fault of the teaching of the revolutionaries, but the result of the stubbornness of the opponents of the new doctrine, of their misoneism, self-interest and egoism. No; political or social revolutions do not need to be accompanied by violence and bloodshed. If those who have usurped the political power would freely abandon it, if the privileged classes would recognise the justice of the claims of the poor and disinherited, there would be no need of violence to bring about political or social changes.

But unfortunately the authorities in power, the privileged classes who have usurped political or economic supremacy, stand to lose by change; it is to their interest to cling to the old institutions, to a state of things so advantageous to themselves, and therefore they so strenuously oppose all innovations and revolutions, with all the forces at their command. The natural result is that the adherents of new ideas, of any radical change,

much against their will, are compelled to use force to break the stubborn resistance of the usurpers. This explains the frequent bloodshed and terrorism that precede or accompany political and social revolutions. In this respect, of course, the French Revolutions of 1789 and 1793 and the Russian upheaval of 1917 have something in common: there were, and are, many social groups and classes who would lose by a transference of political power, by a social levelling, and are, therefore, bound to offer open or secret resistance.

If the Russian Revolution has so far been accompanied by less bloodshed than that of 1789, it is due to the fact that the revolutionaries in Russia were better organised than were their prototypes of 1789, that they counted among their ranks more social groups ready to make a clean sweep than was the case in France, and that those who had the power in their hands in Russia judged it useless to offer resistance. But the Russian Revolution is still in a state of being, of becoming, and I am afraid that it will not be carried to a successful issue without violence, bloodshed and terrorism. In fact, I see it coming; and if a period of terror follows in Russia, it will only be natural, however much to be deplored.

This brings me to another point which the French and the Russian Revolutions share in common: the fact that they both were the outcome of historical development and slow evolution. Here again I venture to contradict the idea that a revolution, any revolution, political, social or otherwise, is a sudden upheaval, a *saltus mortale*, a catastrophe standing in direct opposition to evolution, a negation of the eternal laws of nature.

In my opinion both the French Revolution of 1789 and the Russian upheaval of 1917 are the culminating points of an historical evolution, the consummation of causes accumulated in the course of centuries, the visible manifestations of the spirit of revolt dormant in the nation. A revolution is not opposed to an evolution, but is the effect of the latter. Modern geology has abandoned the catastrophic idea and accepts the theory of evolution; but, for all that, it does not deny the existence of volcanic eruptions. Subterranean forces accumulate slowly, gradually, invisibly, but once they have reached a certain degree, they explode.

Take another instance among natural phenomena, the birth of the child. It develops slowly, legally, but it comes into the world in a revolutionary manner.[1] And what is true of nature is also true of historical developments. Just as tempests and volcanic eruptions do not exclude, but, on the contrary, are the result of slow evolutions, so political and social revolutions are the normal result, the fatal, irresistible moments, in the long process of historical development; they are a crisis and a goal of a social evolution.

Political and social revolutions do not come like thieves in the night, like something unexpected. They are not the result of immediate, trivial, superficial events, but of far-reaching accumulated causes. They are the outcome of a state of things, full of contradictions and antagonisms, of a clash of interests. They are closely connected with the old order of things which the revolution destroys. For each historical period is the effect of a preceding epoch, just as it is the cause of future events,

[1] Cf. Kautsky, *Die Sociale Révolution.*

and to-day carries with it the germs of the morrow. Each generation is the father of the one succeeding it, and each historical period carries in it the seeds of a new one. Clear-sighted men have always been able to see the signs of approaching revolutions; to them they were never sudden and catastrophic, but fatal and inevitable. Neither nature nor history know any miracles. For what indeed is a miracle? It is a fact or a manifestation the hidden causes of which escape the human eye and understanding. A revolution is the visible effect of many causes accumulated, it is the crisis which has necessarily been preceded by a fermentation, visible or invisible.

Now, political and social revolutions are the result of accumulated ideas and sentiments of *discontent*, of antagonism, contradiction and a growing feeling of justice. In this latter respect, the feeling of justice, revolutions differ from insurrections and revolts which, in the majority of cases, prove futile and effect no change whatever. The slave who is not animated by a sense of justice, but merely by a feeling of envy, is not thirsting for liberty and equality; he merely wishes to become master and enslave, in his turn, his master of yesterday. *His* revolt is destructive, whilst a real revolution must carry in it constructive elements as well. The slave is not fighting for liberty and justice *per se*, but for the power which he is anxious to wrest from his master. He is animated by a spirit of revenge. Real revolutionaries are not.

Quite different are the revolutions which are the result of historical development and in which men are anxious to shake off the shackles of thraldom,

not in revenge, not with a view to enslave and tyrannise the powerful and mighty of yesterday, but in order to make men equal: all men, the masters as well as the slaves. The revolt of the slaves, therefore, is only an artificial movement, whilst a great and lasting revolution is the result of historical development and of evolution. Thus, both the French Revolution of 1789 and the Russian upheaval are evolutionary, historical acts, which were fated to come.

Elisée Réclus writes with truth "that evolution and revolution are scientifically not opposed to each other; they are the two successive acts of the same phenomenon, evolution preceding revolution, whilst the latter again carries in its wake a new evolution, mother of new revolutions." [1] If evolution be change, how can this change take place without suddenly altering the equilibrium of life? "The seed falls into the soil and appears lost and dead for a time, but suddenly it sprouts forth, becomes a plant, a tree, and bears fruit. And the birth of the child is another revolutionary act —the result of a slow evolution."

The Russian autocracy and the French absolute monarchy carried in them the seeds of a revolution, political and social. "Even Taine, the critic and detractor of the French Revolution, admitted that "*les institutions de la France n'étaient plus viables*," and that consequently the Revolution had become inevitable.[2] "D'avance et à son insu," continues Taine, "chaque génération porte en elle-même son avenir et son histoire."

[1] Cf. *L'Évolution, La Révolution*, Paris, 1898, p. 15.

[2] Cf. Ch. Renouvier, *Philosophie Analytique de l'Histoire*, 1897, vol. iv, p. 533–4.

And both Sorel and Guizot believe that the French Revolution was the natural and necessary result of European history. "Cette révolution," adds Sorel, n'a point porté de conséquence, même la plus singulière, qui ne découle de cette histoire et ne s'explique par les précédents de l'ancien régime."

If the monarchic system of France, as it emerged from the hands of Richelieu, was fated to lead to 1789 and 1792, the history of autocracy in Russia, the history of the Romanovs, was bound to end in the upheaval of 1917. Russian autocracy carried in its womb the germs of revolution. In subsequent chapters I shall show that the spirit of revolt was present in Russia from the days of the establishment of autocracy, and how the latter actually fostered this spirit of revolt by its endeavours to suppress it. The greater the abuses of autocracy, the more vigorous became the spirit of revolt, and the more quickly the final crisis was brought about.

But if both 1789 and 1917 were the results of a long chain of evolutionary processes, of historical development, the comparison between the two Revolutions ends there. The French and the Russian Revolutions differ in their respective causes and in their tendencies and their aims. I have said that political and social revolutions are "the result of accumulated ideas and sentiments of discontent"; that is, the discontent of one or several social groups with the existing order of things. The causes of this discontent may be social, economic, political or religious. It may be an oppression of the body or an oppression of the mind. The discontent may vent itself in claims for material and economic improvements, or it may be anxious to obtain liberty of conscience

and freedom of movement, abolition of all distinctions of class, race, sex or religion. The discontent may be animated chiefly, as I have already pointed out, by envy, or it may be fostered and strengthened by the nobler ideals of justice and equality. It therefore follows that the greater the number of groups dissatisfied with the existing order of things, the vaster the majority among whom the discontent had spread, the more extensive the claims and the more radical must be the change.

On the other hand, the greater the number of groups who claim an amelioration, a change, an abolition of the existing order of things, who struggle against the privileged and legislative classes or groups, and who, consequently, have separate and individual interests to defend, the more difficult will be the constructive part of the Revolution.

Now let us see which social groups, discontented and revolutionary, were responsible for the upheavals of 1789 and 1792 in France, and of 1917 in Russia.

The French Revolution of 1789, and, as a matter of fact, all the successive Revolutions of 1793, 1830 and 1848 were pre-eminently bourgeois movements. I do not mean to say that the proletariat played no part in that of 1789. Quite the contrary; but the proletariat, unconscious as yet of its own vast strength, worked in the interests of the bourgeoisie. The Revolution of 1789 was the work of the upper bourgeoisie, which then made an effort to shake off the shackles of thraldom into which an absolute monarchy and a feudal system had forced it.

It has been rightly pointed out[1] by historians that the principal idea of the French Revolution was that of equality. This is to a certain extent true. But it was equality as the bourgeois understood it: equality of the capitalist with the privileged noble and aristocrat. The ideal of the bourgeoisie of 1789 was the equality of Birth and Capital (Europe and, above all, democratic America have since adopted this principle), but not the equality of Capital and Labour. All the laws of 1789 made a distinction between the "bons citoyens" and the "gens mal intentionées," between the capitalist bourgeois and the poor devil of a prolétaire. The Constitution of 1791 clearly drew a distinction between a wealthy, dominating, governing class and a governed, labouring group. There were full citizens and citizens of a lower grade.

Even in 1793, the movement was far from proletarian. Of course, the *cahiers des doléances* raised a new tone and spoke in the voice of the proletariat, but the voice remained unheard. "The voice of freedom," they cried, "says nothing to the heart of a poor devil who is hungry." Marat even went so far as to maintain that equality of rights must logically lead to equality of enjoyment!

The movement of 1789 in general was thus far from being proletarian.[2] "If one opens the Royal Almanach of the year 1788," writes Bardoux,[3] "one is astonished to find that the first ranks of the Tiers Etat were already in possession of all

[1] Faguet, *L'œuvre sociale.*
[2] Cf. W. Sombart, *Sozialismus*, Jena, 1908, p. 149.
[3] Cf. *Histoire de la Bourgeoisie Française depuis la Révolution.*

the civil functions, excepting alone the Court functions; they were governors of provinces, and filled the majority of posts in the financial and administrative institutions, as well as the judicial, of the country. They were daily acquiring a more preponderating influence in affairs of State. This bourgeoisie, that was already in possession of the public wealth, was anxious to acquire the right to administer its wealth, the chance to increase it and the power to hold it. All the bourgeoisie desired was to be placed upon an equal footing with the nobility and to gain access to the few superior functions and posts to which it still found the way barred. What the bourgeoisie was anxious to obtain was simply the *official* recognition of its power, a power *de jure* which it already possessed *de facto*.

To wrest that power from the hands of absolute monarchy and autocracy, to proclaim its own power to rule as absolute monarchy and autocracy had ruled, was the aim of the bourgeoisie in 1789 and 1793. And it was this aim that the bourgeois called "liberalism," "Revolution," "equality," "liberty," "a democratic government." *Tout comme chez nous!* The bourgeois and capitalists were surprised to hear timid voices, here and there, in favour of the Quatrième Etat. Their only answer was to constitute themselves politically and economically, and to deprive of their rights as citizens, of their rights as electors, the majority of the nation: all those who could not afford to pay a contribution equal to three days' labour, or a silver mark for the right of being eligible.[1]

[1] Cf. B. Lazare, *Idées révolutionnaires*, p. 6.

Thus Capital began its reign and treated Labour as it had itself been treated by absolute monarchy and autocracy! Plutocracy, the mercantile privileged class which was to gain such influence and power during the nineteenth century in Western Europe, and especially in America, had ascended its throne. Compared with 1789, 1917 bears a distinctly proletarian character. Labour, as opposed to Capital, is playing an important and principal rôle in it.

CHAPTER II

PARIS AND PETROGRAD (*continued*)

Socialism and Federalism

Three factors which constitute a mighty current in the upheaval of 1917 were absolutely absent in the French Revolution. They are briefly these: Socialism, Internationalism and its counterpart, Nationalism—or rather the Principle of Nationality—with its variant, Federalism. When I say that Socialism was absent in the French Revolution of 1789, I do not, however, mean to affirm that socialistic ideals, namely, "possession and production in common" and "socialisation of all means of production"—in a word, communism and collectivism, abolition of private and individual property—were unknown before 1789.

A brief glance at the history of philosophical and economic thought previous to 1789 will convince us that such ideas and ideals had already been discussed and propagated by writers of antiquity and of mediaeval Europe alike. Economic questions had occupied the minds of thinkers, of philosophers and sociologists of all ages. Plato may be considered as the first philosopher and exponent of communism. But Plato's communism was idealistic and antidemocratic, inasmuch as in his system the aristocracy, the superior class, played

an important rôle. Plato's communism, therefore, was an aristocratic socialism. The ancient Hebrews and the early Christians had communistic aspirations. The prophet Isaiah foretold an age of perpetual peace, when the lamb and the wolf would dwell together in a peaceful state of communism. The early Christians, mostly revolted proletarians and emancipated Jews, protested against the existing régime of inequality and iniquity, against the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, whilst the masses were plunged in endless misery. Christianity, as it was promulgated by the immediate disciples of the Saviour, protested against such a state of things.

But the disinherited suffering classes were too weak, too powerless, too lacking in organisation in those far-off days, so the early Christians despaired of ever being able to establish a communistic state upon the earth. They turned their eyes to Heaven, and, instead of promising happiness to all upon earth, preached the "Kingdom of Heaven." The poor found some consolation in this doctrine, whilst the rich were quite satisfied. They were ready and willing to submit to democratic principles in a kingdom to-come, to share their bliss on a communistic basis with the poor and disinherited some time in heaven, as long as they were left in possession of their wealth on earth.[1]

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, socialistic and communistic ideas were once more promulgated and preached in a philosophical spirit, *à la* Plato, by such writers as Thomas More and Campanella. The former wrote his *Utopia* and

[1] Cf. *Encyclopédie Socialiste, Un peu d'histoire;* pp. 44–5.

the latter his *City of the Sun*. During the eighteenth century, the philosophers and encyclopædists criticised traditional conceptions and ideas, passing everything through the crucible of reason; it was but natural that they should also attack the sacred right of individual property.

In conformity with the laws of "Reason and Nature," as exposed by Rousseau, Morelly and Mably, all socialistic and communistic ideals and ideas, at first Messianic and theological, become metaphysical, lacking the basis of reality, a well-defined programme, solid ground. They were dreamy, philanthrophic, humanitarian, mystic and philosophical, but not practical.[1] They lacked economic reality and that strength of organisation which alone can overthrow one régime and, upon its ruins, build up another. Such was the true condition of socialistic teaching when the French Revolution of 1789 broke out. The French Revolution had a certain socialistic background or undercurrent, but the proletariat, *i.e.* the working classes or salaried portion of the nation, had as yet too little consciousness of either its rights or its power, and therefore it became the dupe of the bourgeoisie, or the mercantile and plutocratic aristocracy which replaced the aristocracy of birth.

In 1789, various socialist, communist and collectivist ideas and tendencies were struggling into the foreground of thought, but the Revolution being, as I have said, a bourgeois movement, brought about by a class which lived and had its very being in the principle of private and individual property, they were crushed and nipped in their bud. The Quatrième Etat, the proletariat—

[1] Cf. *Encyclopédie Socialiste, Un peu d'histoire*, p. 296.



VASSILIY, PRINCE OF MOSCOW.

not to be confounded with the vagabonds and ragamuffins—was neither organised nor even conscious of its possible power. It has taken ages for the proletariat to become aware of its power, for Labour to dare definitely to declare war on Capital.

The rights of the proletariat only existed in the minds of the philosophers. Yet, though the philosophers of the eighteenth century had attacked the existing institutions, had criticised everything indiscriminately, when the moment arrived for them to pass from metaphysical speculation to reality, they did nothing; when the nation was called upon to express its wishes and requests in the famous *cahiers des doléances*, there was practically no cry—except in a few exceptional instances—for a thorough social change. "L'objet des lois est d'assurer la liberté et la propriété." Feudal rights were attacked, the possessions of the clergy were confiscated; but this was not done in opposition to the principle of private property but as a remedy to ensure it.[1] There was no open, recognised hostility against individual property, no serious attempt to abolish it; its abolition is the key-note of modern socialism. Royalty, which many philosophers identified with the principle of private property, was abolished in 1792, yet none of the governments of the Revolution passed any laws against individual property. On the contrary, both the Constitution of 1791 and the Convention sanctioned it. It was later consecrated by the Constitution of 1793.

Neither the Girondins nor the Jacobins had any clear, definite, collectivist programme. The Jacobins drew their influence from the poor, whose

[1] Cf. Lichtenberger in *Œuvre Sociale*, p. 68.

patrons they were, and therefore were the enemies of the rich. They were enthusiastic about the ideals of social equality, but even they, philosophers and politicians as they were, did not dream of uprooting the existing social order and changing the system of property, or of establishing an agrarian democracy.

Robespierre and St. Just recognised the power of the State to change the social order with regard to property; but, in practice, they, too, found it impossible. Inequality of property, they admitted, was inevitable, but political and civil equality would counterbalance it. By endeavouring to find work for the *sans-travail* (out-of-works), by taxing the rich, by levying heavy ransom upon luxuries, inheritances, etc., they hoped to establish a certain equilibrium.

The Jacobins were animated by a spirit hostile to the aristocracy, the nobles, the rich and wealthy classes, but not to wealth and riches in themselves. An equal distribution of property and of the means of production did not enter into their programme.[1] Property was sacred, communism was absurd, and the suggested agrarian law impracticable. It must be admitted that the Convention passed laws that, apparently, were in accordance with socialistic principles, but their inspiration came not from these principles, but from the spirit of Public Safety. A government, even a strongly conservative one, will in moments of emergency, of storm and stress, often pass laws that savour of socialism, but in reality they are inspired neither by a spirit of democracy nor of socialism: they are rather manifestations of the arbitrary, autocratic power of the

[1] Cf. Lichtenberger in *Œuvre Social*, p. 86.

government in question, or dictated by a care for Public Safety. We have seen many examples of such laws during the last three years.

The only attempt at a collectivist revolution was the conspiracy of Babeuf. This was the direct result of the disillusionment of the Quartrième Etat whom the bourgeoisie had deprived of the benefits and advantages of the Revolution. This is not the place to give the history of Babouvism, as it has been called; for our purpose we need only quote a few passages from the famous *Manifeste des Egaux*, which will give a clear idea of Babeuf's collectivist ideals.

"People of France," he wrote, "for fifteen centuries you have lived as slaves and have, consequently, been unhappy. For six years you have breathlessly waited for independence, happiness and equality. To-day, when you loudly clamour for equality, you are told: Be quiet, *misérables*! Equality is only a chimera; content yourselves with conditional equality; you are all equal before the law, 'Canaille, que te faut-il de plus?' Legislators, rulers, rich proprietors, listen now in your turn. We are all equal, are we not? This principle you do not contest. Well, then! Henceforth we intend to live and to die as equal as when we were born; we wish real equality or death—that's what we want! And we are going to have it. The French Revolution was only the prologue to another revolution, much bigger, much more solemn, which will be the last one.

"The agrarian law was the spontaneous wish of several unprincipled soldiers, moved by instinct rather than by reason. What we want is something infinitely more sublime, more equitable; we

want the community of possession ('le bien des biens'). No more individual landownership; the soil belongs to no one. We demand, we want the enjoyment in common of the fruits of the earth; the fruits belong to one and all. We declare that we can no longer suffer that the vast majority of men should work and sweat in the service of, and for the benefit and pleasure of, the extremely small minority. It has lasted too long already, that less than a million men should be in possession of what actually belongs to more than twenty millions of their equals. This great scandal must now cease, at last. These revolting distinctions between rich and poor, great and small, master and servant, government and governed, must disappear. There should be no difference between men except that of age and sex. Since we all have the same needs and the same faculties, there should be but one standard of education and food for all men: we share the same sun and the same air, so why should not the same quantity and the same quality of food be ready for every man?" And he finishes:

"Peuple de France!

"Ouvre tes yeux et ton cœur à la plénitude de la félicité. Reconnais, et proclame, avec nous la République des Egaux."

According to Babeuf, slavery, tyranny and oppression are the direct results of inequality, and inequality is the outcome of the principle of private property. Property, therefore, is the scourge of society, it is a public crime.

"La nature a donné à chaque homme un droit égal à la jouissance de tous les biens."

"La nature à imposé à chacun l'obligation de travailler."

"Les travaux et les jouissances doivent être communs à tous."

"Il y a oppression quand l'un s'épuise par le travail et manque de tout, tandis que l'autre nage dans l'abondance sans rien faire."

Such were, briefly, the collectivist ideals which Babeuf and Buanorotti hoped to carry into effect.

The conspiracy of Babeuf was crushed, and on June 14th, 1791, a law was passed that deprived the working classes of the right to assemble and discuss ways and means of defending their common interests. "Il ne doit pas être permis aux citoyens de certains professions," says the report of Chapelier, "de s'assembler pour prétendus intérêts communs." The groups having certain interests in common were thus not allowed to organise themselves, to discuss their grievances and to devise means for their defence. The interests of the Quatrième Etat were sacrificed for the general interest.[1] They protested, but they were too weak and powerless to exercise any real pressure. "Oh frères aînés qui vendez Joseph," cried Dufournoy de Villiers, the author of the *cahier du Quatrième ordre,* "qui abandonnez Benjamin, égoïstes, rénégats de l'humanité, c'est de cette prétendue canaille que je me ferai gloire d'être le défenseur."

But the defenders were few. The proletariat was not organised, had no leaders, and even those who were supposed to lead them had no clearly elaborated programme; they rather followed the proletarians instead of leading them and putting their aspirations into concrete form. What were

[1] Cf. Bouchez and Roux, *Histoire Parlémentaire.*

the aspirations of the proletariat in those days? A desire to live better, to eat their fill. The proletarians of 1789 and 1791 were hungry devils, simply; they cried for bread and liberty; but, above all, it was bread that they wanted.

Yet the French Revolution, though not really socialistic or collectivist, paved the way for socialism. It became the starting point of the collectivist ideal; it helped socialism to emerge from the chaos of semi-consciousness, to proceed from the domain of Utopia into that of real politics, from philosophy and literature into history.[1] To the democracies of Europe of the nineteenth century, the French Revolution has been what the Russian Revolution of 1917 will prove to be to the democracies of the world of the twentieth century. The very fact that the Revolution of 1789 was not socialistic, either in its tendencies or its results, that the principle of individual property remained intact, and that the power was merely shifted from the hands of the aristocracy of birth into those of the plutocracy, gave rise to much deep thinking on the part of the sociologists and economists of the nineteenth century; it made them fully realise that the fundamental social evil lay in the unequal distribution of wealth and of the means of production. The Proletariat, and by proletariat I mean the manual as well as the intellectual proletariat, the Labourer as distinguished from the Capitalist, gradually began to understand the necessity of organisation if it ever meant to make its influence felt. Thus, after 1789, socialism began to develop on real, scientific and economic bases, and to make such steady progress ahead that it was able to

[1] Cf. Lichtenberger, *l.c.*, p. 102.

play a very prominent part in the Russian Revolution of 1917.

It was during the nineteenth century that St. Simon, one of the pioneers, one might say, of modern socialism, elaborated his system, which is at once practical, philanthropic, humanitarian and mystico-religious. St. Simon, although not an opponent of the capitalist, since he failed to perceive the antagonism which must necessarily exist between Capital and Labour, was clearly upon the side of the labouring classes and advocated their interests. It was also during the nineteenth century that Robert Owen became the initiator of the modern legislation in favour of the working classes, and tried his communistic principles in America; that Charles Fourier criticised civilisation and capitalistic barbarity, and promulgated the theory of agricultural associations; that Proudhon condemned property and stigmatised it as "theft." "La propriété c'est le vol." The nineteenth century was the century of various new attempts at mystic socialism which found their exponents in Cabet, the author of the Utopia *Voyage à l'Ile d'Icarie*; in Bouchez and Pierre Leroux. It also gave birth to the theories and doctrines of Marx, Engels and Lassalle, of Malon, Lavrov and Bakunin.

It was during the second half of the nineteenth century that the "Internationale" came into existence and created a link between the labouring classes of all countries, thus organising the proletariat of Europe, or international Labour against international Capital. It was also during the nineteenth century that various new political revolutions took place, that democracy made repeated

efforts to pull down the strongholds of aristocracy, autocracy and absolute monarchy. It was also the century of Blanqui, who was revolutionary socialism personified: Blanqui, who when asked by the judge what he was by profession, replied: "Je suis prolétaire." It was the century that witnessed the Revolution of 1848, of Chartism and of the Paris Commune. What a vast stretch of road socialism has travelled since 1789! It has travelled far and learned much in the course of a single century, and from the stores of its acquired knowledge the Russian Revolution of 1917 was able to draw help and guidance.

Socialism is one of the principal factors of the Russian upheaval. The agrarian problem was shirked and avoided by the men of 1789, but the agrarian question is to-day the pivot, the *sine qua non*, of the Russian social change. The proletariat was almost ignored in 1789, but to-day, the Soviet, the Council of soldiers and workmen, is practically in control of the Russian Government. A very brief glance at the events of the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, and especially at the constitution of parties in the last Dumas, will show us what deep roots socialism has taken in Russia.

In 1884, the Social Democratic party was founded in Switzerland by four militant revolutionaries—Plekhanov, Vera Sassoulitsh, Deutsch and Axelrod. Their novel methods of propaganda were directly inspired by the teaching of Marx and Engels. They spread the ideas of Marx among the labouring classes, thus preparing the proletariat for the economic fight. From 1891 to 1894 a series of strikes were declared over Central Russia, at

Moscow and at Petrograd. In 1895, a vast strike was organised at Petrograd by Lenin and Martov, in which 35,000 working men participated.

In 1900–1901, the socialist revolutionary party was reorganised under the intellectual leadership of Lavrov. One of the most influential members of the party was Victor Tshernov, editor of the *Znamya Trouda* (*The Banner of Work*). The majority of its members belonged to the liberal professions, and have exercised a considerable influence upon the "Union of Officers" and the "Union of Soldiers and Sailors." A great deal was expected from the socialist tendencies inherent in the peasants, who still clung to the form of collectivism manifested in the *Mir*. It therefore advocated the immediate socialisation of the land. On the other hand, the Social Democrats declared that this ancient and primitive form of communism would have to disappear and make room for the modern capitalistic forms of production, as a necessary preliminary to complete social construction, which could only be the result of a slow evolution. Apart from agrarian reform, the social revolutionary party included terrorism in its programme.

In consequence of the narrow dogmatism and sectarianism shown at the congress held in London in 1907, a split occurred in the Social Democratic party. It broke into two factions: the *Bolsheviki*, or *majoritaires*, headed by Lenin, and the *Menshoviki*, or *minoritaires*, whose leaders were Plekhanov, Martov and Dahn. The former would have nothing to do with the liberal bourgeoisie, whom they accused of monarchic tendencies. They accused Plekhanov and his friends of being too benevolent towards the Liberals and the Cadets.

The *Menshoviki*, on the contrary, maintained that a revolution would be impossible unless Russia first realised the political and social conditions prevailing in Western Europe, and that the liberal bourgeoisie must be an important factor in the revolutionary movement. It would be dangerous, they said, to alienate the sympathies of this section of the nation and thus throw it into the arms of reaction. Each section had its dogma, which, with the doctrinaire temperament so common in Russia, it pursued, and is still pursuing, to the extreme.

By an Imperial Ukase, Tsar Nicholas II dissolved the First Duma. Then the Liberal and Labour members endeavoured to organise, by the famous Vyborg Manifesto, an appeal to the nation, but their effort proved futile. Yet "La Duma est morte, vive la Duma!" exclaimed the late Campbell Bannerman. Energetic and active preparations were carried on for the election of representatives to the Second Duma. In this second Russian Parliament, the Social-Democratic party counted not less than sixty-six deputies, whilst the socialist-revolutionaries, soon joined by three Armenian deputies, had thirty-five seats. Sixty-six deputies belonged to Labour groups. Thus, out of the 500 deputies, 170 were of acknowledged socialistic tendencies.

In consequence of the triumph of autocracy and its new electoral laws, the Third Duma was distinctly reactionary, but the fight of the Social Democrats nevertheless continued with fierceness and intensity. The Social Democratic party gradually gained in strength and power; it counted among its leaders Plekhanov, Axelrod, Alexinsky, Sticklov, Razanov and many others. Of late

years this party has developed a wonderful activity and energy which space prevents me from describing in detail. The other parties, socialistic in their tendencies and connected with the Social Democratic organisation, were not less active and energetic. Such are: (1) The Bund, an organisation of Jewish working men which was established in 1897, and comprises over 50,000 members (its tendencies are socialistic and Jewish-national as opposed to Zionism); (2) The Lettish Social Democratic party, which is the socialist organisation of the Baltic provinces; and (3) The Social Democratic party of Poland and Lithuania, which must not be confounded with the Socialist Polish Party (P.P.S.), whose basis of action is the re-establishment of Polish independence.

Now, though socialism made vast strides during the second half of the nineteenth century, and has taken root all over the world among the labouring classes, at least, yet, logically, it has to yield to internationalism. Socialism is collectivism; it is organised Labour against Capital, but Capital is international, therefore, if the proletariat was decided to wrest the power from the hands of the capitalists, it had to fight them with their own weapons, *i.e.* upon international ground. Internationalism is socialism carried to its logical conclusion. I hope I shall not be accused of exaggeration or partisanship for saying this. I am neither a collectivist nor a socialist, even though I approve of many of the principles of the socialistic doctrine. But logically speaking, I fail to understand how any one—I mean any logically reasoning, serious-minded individual—honest and true to his convictions, can at once be a socialist and yet an

ardent nationalist, *i.e.* an opponent of internationalism. The capitalists of the socialist's own native country are his enemies, just as much as the capitalists of another country. The conception of the socialist-nationalist is, to my mind, just as illogical as that of the Zionist-Marxist, or Zionist and loyal subject of country of birth.

Internationalism has, therefore, become the very foundation stone of modern socialism. It is vastly different from the internationalism which, during the nineteenth century, has gradually developed itself in the domains of art and science. The internationalism of the proletariat, of labour, the internationalism which is the direct and logical outcome of socialism, must be anti-national—taking nationalism in the sense of Jingoism.

"The attacks of proletarian internationalism," writes Sombart, "are principally directed against such conceptions as Chauvinism and imperialism; against national pride, against all policies of conquest and expansion, colonial and otherwise, as well as against militarism and war." [1] *Nations* yearn for peace. They know no antagonism, no hostility which would compel them to draw the sword. Every modern war is a senseless massacre of the unwilling masses, who are led to slaughter like cattle. Militarism is the origin of such criminal enterprises.[2] Such have been the declarations of all socialist internationalist congresses: Paris, 1889, Brussels, 1891, London, 1906. These international congresses all decided to oppose militarism and war!

I call the reader's attention to this last sentence, and invite him to reflect and draw his own

[1] *l.c.*, p. 216. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 216.

conclusions. And while he is thus engaged, he may at the same time consider the following fact: After three years of a terrible war, the spiritual head of Catholic Christianity, His Holiness the Pope, has, at last, decided to preach the peace of the Gospel. When one portion of humanity has for three years learned to hate another portion, Pope Benedict XV comes forward and reminds us of the religion of Love, as taught by Him who preached the Sermon on the Mount. As if love and hatred are sentiments which man can harbour in his breast at the call of authority. Once we love, it is not easy for us to learn to hate; but when we have learned, and been taught, and rightly too, to hate, we cannot in a moment turn round and begin to love, as if nothing had happened. It is sheer hypocrisy to pretend it be possible.

Though internationalism is opposed to Jingoism and imperialism, modern social democrats do not at all agree with Marx when he says that "the working men have no fatherland," "that the proletarians have no home, and that therefore you could not take away from them what they did not possess." Though opposed to imperialism, to annexations, to "political patriotism," as Sombart puts it,[1] the majority of socialists to-day are partisans of national collective existence—in other words, of "cultural nationalism," or "cultured patriotism."

It would lead me too far to point out the contradiction existing between internationalism on the one hand, with the "solidarity of the proletarians of all countries" as a fundamental principle, and the nationalism, or "solidarity of all classes of one

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 231.

nation" in their common interests, as opposed to a foreign nation, on the other. But what I wish to emphasise here is that during the nineteenth century the idea of internationalism, as well as its counterpart, an intense nationalism, has widely developed. It has been since the Revolution of 1789, and especially since the Napoleonic Wars, that the "principle of nationality" has acquired such a preponderating place in the history of nations, in sociology and in politics. By the "principle of nationality" we understand the "right of a nation (or an ethnic group) to constitute itself into a separate State."

Now, the French Revolution of 1789, whilst it clearly favoured the principle of nationality, was not seriously faced by it in France herself. The French Revolution was directed against the absolutism of princes, and, in principle, was not concerned with the idea and sentiments of nationalities. As far as the question arose in France, the Revolution was hostile to it. It suppressed the provincial traditions and endeavoured to make the unity of the State complete. Yet it was the French Revolution, by proclaiming the liberty of the oppressed, and later the Napoleonic Wars, that helped to awaken the sentiment and the principle of nationality. The principle of nationality was formulated for the first time by Mme. de Stael in her book on Germany.[1]

Napoleon had firmly established two ideas: the dynastic idea and that of conquest, both diametrically opposed to the principle of nationality. The Holy Alliance also upheld the dynastic and

[1] Cf. Kojuharoff, *Du Principe des Nationalités*, Genève, 1884, p. 38.

conquest ideas. This naturally led to a reaction, to a revolt of national sentiment, to the awakening, development and strengthening of the spirit and principle of nationality. After 1848 the national movement became more intense in Europe. It manifested itself in two ways: on the one hand, it aimed at reuniting all the scattered portions of one nation, or ethnic group, whilst, on the other, it worked for a separation, a dissolution of artificial unions: the direct results of conquests and dynastic principles.[1] Since 1859 the principle of nationality has made itself felt all over Europe, in Italy, Greece, Poland, Turkey and Austria.

The Italian national movement, since 1848, has contributed greatly to the development of the principle of nationality by introducing it into the domain of practical politics, as distinguished from that of theory. It was officially sanctioned in the war against Austria in 1859. Napoleon II became the defender of the principle, to the great amazement of the public.[2] The principle of nationality was the pretext Europe used to intervene, and the reason of her policy, in the Balkans and in the Orient. And, strange to say, Russian autocracy, that personification of the dynastic principle, of the idea of divine right, both so diametrically opposed to the conception that nations should dispose of themselves as a collectivity, has proved the champion of nationality in Turkey! This is perhaps the only point which the Revolution has in common with autocracy. For the principle of nationality is one of the most impor-

[1] Cf. Raoul de la Grasserie, *Du Principe Sociologique des Nationalités*, Paris, 1905, p. 10.

[2] Cf. *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1866, p. 700.

tant features of the programme of the Russian upheaval and the national Reconstruction.

It has been said that both in France—and in Russia of 1905, the trouble sprang from two chief causes, namely, financial difficulties and the wretched state of the peasantry: causes which were utilised by the intellectuals of the respective countries to set in motion the wheel of reform. That several factors, however, were present in France which were absent in the Russia of 1905, and these coming into play in 1789, caused the French Revolution to assume its fierce and terrible form.[1] One of these factors was the war of invasion. Now it must be remembered that the recent Russian Revolution has broken out in the midst of a war of invasion. But whilst the wars of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries were fought for dynastic principles, for expansion and greed, and whilst even the French Revolution, when it became victorious, ignored the rights of nationalities, the present war is said to be a defence of the principle of nationalities, a war in favour of the independence of small states, of the principles of autonomies and federalisms.

Hand in hand with the principle of nationality goes the idea of "federalism." By federalism we understand the right of various provinces of the same state to enjoy a local autonomy. Revolutionary France of 1789 had emerged as a political entity from the hands of Richelieu and Louis XIV, although administratively she lacked unity. France was divided into several provinces which enjoyed a certain independence, separate tariffs, legislation and budgets. The Constituent Assembly wiped

[1] Cf. *Fortnightly Review*, 1906, vol. ii, p. 400.



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out the existence of the provinces, and by dividing the country into departments, districts and communes, destroyed every vestige of federal or autonomous government in France. The men of the Revolution felt the possible danger of a federal movement, of an attempt by some of the departments to tear themselves away from the centre and to constitute themselves into so many Republics, and by celebrating the feast of federation—July 14th, 1790—they hoped to avoid it. "La République une et indivisible" was decreed.

And yet the danger had not been so very great after all, for federalism in France had little chance, both on historical and ethnical grounds. It is true that the Girondins, who succeeded in raising the revolt of sixty departments against Paris, were accused of federalism. Yet it is extremely doubtful whether the Girondins really intended to create a federal state in France; in any case, they loudly protested against the accusation of federalism. They, too, were ardent supporters of "La République une et indivisible." It was simply a fight between two parties, each anxious to lead the Revolution.[1] The Girondins were vanquished by the men of the Montagne, and France, one and undivided, even more than she had been in the days of Richelieu, was handed over as such to the Empire. During the Commune, an attempt was made at federalism, but its failure showed how little chance it has in France.

Now if one again compares 1789 with 1917, one finds what a profound difference there exists between the French and the Russian Revolutions.

[1] Cf. Wallon, *La Révolution et le Féderalisme en* 1793, Paris, 1886.

A Russian Republic, "une et indivisible," is almost out of the question. Not only has the principle of nationality, and with it federalism—which is more closely connected with it than one would at first imagine[1]—made rapid strides, and is part of the programme of the Allied statesmen, but there is such vast scope, such an immense field, for autonomous and federalistic agitations in Russia, Poland has been promised autonomy, Finland and the Ukraine have torn themselves away from Russia. There is little doubt that in such a vast country, whose inhabitants belong to 128 nationalities, every day will bring forward new claims based upon the principle of nationalism or federalism. Therein lies the greatest danger for New Russia, but just emerging from the iron grip of autocracy.

It must also be remembered that there is an enormous difference between federated states like Switzerland and America, who went from separation to union, uniting into one federate state, and Russia, who would have to reverse the process. The requests for autonomy and federalism, which have practically been acknowledged by the Provisional Government of Russia and by the all-powerful parties, is thus another factor fraught with great danger, which the France of 1789 knew little of, or which, if it really existed, the Convention overcame with but slight difficulty. In an age of nationalism run mad, on the one hand, and "internationalism" on the other, loudly proclaiming that "le patriotisme est une mauvaise, étroite et funeste habitude," that frontiers ought

[1] Cf. also M. Block, *Dictionnaire général de la Politique*, Paris, 1884, vol, ii, p. 376.

to be abolished, etc., the clash and antagonism between the various ideals and ideas, sentiments and interests, becomes tremendous.

To sum up: 1789 was the revolt of one social group against two others, *viz.* the bourgeoisie against the aristocracy and the clergy. The proletariat, but little developed and less organised, was ignored. The Russian upheaval is the work of the organised proletariat to a great extent. The French Revolution had no principles of nationality to deal with, and was hostile towards any attempt of federalism, whilst New Russia is faced by numerous questions emanating from the principle of nationality, and is clearly favouring, or is compelled to seem to favour, the federalistic programme. In 1789, collectivist ideals were only beginning to emerge from a state of semi-conscious idealism, whilst in 1917, they have entered the domain of reality. The Russian Revolution is the work of numerous social groups who have all separated, who often have antagonistic interests, to defend. Capital in 1789 had not as yet captured the power it wields to-day, and consequently Labour was not so hostile to it. During the nineteenth century Capital has acquired tremendous power, and Labour is bound, therefore, to see in it its arch-enemy.

I must mention one other factor which was also absent in 1789. The French Revolution was the revolt of a social group only, the questions of ethnology and religious beliefs entered but little into it, whilst the Russian upheaval is the revolt of social as well as ethnic and religious groups. The Jews, for instance, whom the French Revolution emancipated, contributed to the overthrow

of the old régime individually but not collectively, whilst in Russia they have been collectively responsible for the overthrow, and have largely contributed to the triumph of Democracy over Autocracy, as will be shown in one of the later chapters. In France there were oppressed social groups; in Russia there were social, ethnic and religious groups that sighed and groaned under the yoke of oppression. In a word, in the France of 1789, the demands were not so numerous, the interests not so varied, and the antagonism between them not so intense as is the case in the Russia of 1917.

The above comparison and survey will perhaps shed some light upon the difficulties which have arisen, and which were bound to arise, in New Russia. To understand these difficulties it is necessary to examine the deeper causes underlying the apparent state of chaos. To say that the majority of the Russian revolutionaries are pacifists—now a term of opprobrium equal to that of hooligan in those far-off days when Europe was at peace—would be an unjustifiable statement, especially with regard to men who have never shrunk from a fight with their enemies, and who have fearlessly faced prison, exile, the mines, and even death, for the sake of the cause; who, in short, have been good fighters all their lives. "Traitors," too, is an ugly word to use, besides providing no adequate or psychological explanation of present events. There may, or there may not be, traitors among the Russian revolutionaries; it is for history to judge.

The causes of the trouble are much more complicated. They are briefly these: The authors of

the Revolution, from whatever class, group, social or ethnic, they were drawn, and whatever creed they held, were all of one mind as far as the destructive work was concerned, even if they differed as to the means to be employed. But now that the destructive work is accomplished and Tsardom lies prostrate, the different elements composing the revolutionary forces part company. The architects cannot agree as to the plan of the new structure that is to be erected upon the ruins of the old. We are witnessing a clash, conflict and confusion of sentiments, ideals and ideas. Men, if not actually speaking a Babel of tongues, are certainly thinking a Babel of thoughts. They are also, not infrequently, taking the "ought to" of ethics for the "it is" of daily life; they are taking dreams for realities. The Russians are by nature theorists, given to abstract reasoning, and they cling to their theories with the fanaticism of the doctrinaire. The different currents of opinion, constitutional liberalism, or a liberal bourgeoisie, Socialism, Anarchism, Nationalism, Imperialism, Humanitarianism, and Internationalism, as well as many other "isms" are crossing each other.

Some Russians are satisfied with "political emancipation"; others are dreaming of an "emancipation from politics." Some Russians would be satisfied with a substitution of new gods for old, would be content with thorough repairs in the old structure, whilst others desire a clean sweep, the complete overthrow of all the idols which humanity has hitherto worshipped, and a *tabula rasa* for an entirely new building. Some have raised nationality into a creed; others are worshipping the individual. The former, like Lavrov,

are for a "confraternity of men," without distinction of race, nationality or language. In the view of Bakunin and his school the individual is everything; society is, or should be, an agglomeration of pure spirits, a commerce of ideas, whose goal is liberty. Man should not be subordinate to, but co-ordinate with his neighbour, and the aim of government should be to make itself superfluous.

Some of the revolutionaries would be satisfied with a constitutional monarchy like that of Great Britain; others desire a federal republic, like that of Switzerland or the United States. Others again have more ideal dreams: they dream of establishing a Republic of the Just, and take for their models the Republic of Plato, the City of St. Augustine, the Utopia of More, Harrington's Oceana, Campanella's City of the Sun, Fénélon's Salente, and the types of society imagined by Jean Jacques Rousseau, or by the ancient prophets who foretold the Kingdom of God. These dreamers forget that even Rousseau himself said that such a city presupposes a nation of gods, or, to use a more modern expression, a race of supermen. It is a city in which no man is born, and wherein no man has ever physically lived: it exists only in the realm of imagination. The men who dream of such ideals would have to legislate for pure spirits and to build a solid structure upon a foundation of clouds.

The Russian Revolution has broken out in the midst, perhaps as a result, of a great war. We have grown familiar, during the last three years, with the now famous phrase: "The present war is a war of ideas." It is quite natural, however, that men, according to their particular trend of

thought and temperament, should put different constructions upon this phrase. To some, a war of ideas means a war with heavy guns and mitrailleuses, a war in which men kill each other to make their respective ideas triumphant. Others construe the phrase to mean a war in which ideas do all the fighting. But this is not the only reason which prompts some of the Russian revolutionaries to adopt the attitude of pacifism. Many of them draw, as President Wilson has done, a clear distinction between the German governing classes and the German people. They believe that the German people will deal with the Hohenzollerns as the Russians have dealt with the Romanovs. This is the view of the Social Democrats in Russia, who are mostly Marxists, and still cling to their faith in the German working classes.

On the other hand, the Social Revolutionaries, who now style themselves, "National Socialists," together with the anarchists like Kropotkin, have no illusions with regard to Marx and the German socialists. They are convinced, as Bakunin was, that "the assumption of a real difference between the Prussian Government and the German people is illusory and sentimental," that the Germans are the most "reactionary and authoritative people" in the world, "lacking the instinct of liberty." The Social Democrats say, "Let us reason with the mind of Germany, and thus conquer"; the National Socialists, more clear-sightedly reply, "Let us conquer, and then we will reason." Beyond this it may be said that the Marxists in Russia are bent upon shifting the war from a war of nations to a war of classes. They care little for the map of Europe, so long as their ideas of a social recon-

struction emerge triumphant from the welter of sacrifices.

Another psychological current underlying the present ferment in Russia, another idea "struggling in the background of the Russian convulsion," is the question of democracy and "democratic control." Here again men are apt to put different constructions upon the words "democratic control." When is it to begin? When will democracy really assert itself? If democratic control, they say, is to be the watchword of Europe in a not dim and distant future, if the triumph of democracy is to be the great conquest, the vast annexation wrested from Prussian militarism, then democracy should have a voice in the war, even before it has been brought to a successful issue.

Hitherto, say the democrats in Russia, war has been declared and carried on without our having been consulted; we have heard vague formulas and aspirations, but we have had no control of the war; we are ignorant of secret diplomatic arrangements and treaties; we know not to what extent the government has pledged the nation, its wealth and its future; we are told that this war is to lay the foundations for a new edifice, a new Europe; we labourers and wage-earners may have views as to the nature of that edifice different from those of the governing and capitalist classes; we are told this war is to be the end of the era of conquest; we do not want it to prepare the way for a new era of exploitation; we are all anxious to crush Prussian militarism, but you governing and capitalist classes may be anxious to do it for the benefit of the bourgeoisie; and, incidentally, the German bourgeoisie would profit, whilst our own

proletariat would suffer; we Russian democrats have decided to continue the war and to carry it to a successful issue under really democratic control, which must from to-day enter into power; thus alone can we make our arrangements both for crushing Prussian militarism and for safeguarding the future of the working classes; we are quite content for our capitalists to suffer as well as German capitalists, and for the German working classes to gain as well as our own working classes.

Such are the cross-currents of the Russian Revolution, such are the thoughts and theories of the men in the forefront of the movement. They spring from the different doctrines of the philosophers and sociologists who sowed the seeds of the Revolution, and also from the various, and often antagonistic, interests of the social, ethnic and religious groups, whose discontent was the prime factor of the upheaval.

CHAPTER III

THE SPIRIT OF REVOLT

THE news of the Russian Revolution has come to Europe like a thunderbolt from the blue. Out of chaos a new world seems to have emerged—a world of freedom and liberty, a world created by the fiat of the workers grown grey in the struggle. But *ex nihilo nihil.* The human creators who have called into being this new world—the far-reaching effects of which Europe has not yet realised—have had good creative matter accumulated in the course of decades, and even centuries, to work upon. The spirit of revolt did not suddenly swoop down upon the captives of Tsardom; it has long been brooding and hovering over the vast plains of Russia; but now, at last, it has manifested itself in this new upheaval, in this overthrow of autocracy and the downfall of the house of Romanov, in this crumbling down of the old bureaucratic régime, undermined to its very foundations.

It has often been stated that the historical period of the Russian Revolution began in the year 1855, the Crimean War, or, as some say, with the rising of the Decembrists in 1825. In my opinion, however, the beginnings of the Russian Revolution may be sought for in a much more remote period. The seeds were first sown in Russian soil, and in the Slavonic soul, when the Moscow autocracy

arose upon the ruins of the power established by the Mongol Khans. The spirit of revolt has existed in Russia since time immemorial. It has always struggled to express itself, and has done so at various times and epochs in different ways. It found a homestead here and there among different strata of society; it was either political, or social, or even both at once, according to need.

Sometimes it fought against purely Russian evils: despotism, absolutism and autocracy; whilst, at others, it waged war against social wrongs such as the rest of Europe were also suffering; then it became cosmopolitan instead of local or purely national. Sometimes it took the form of a struggle against political oppression and endeavoured to endow Russia with various institutions similar to those existing in the West, in France, Great Britain, Italy, Switzerland and America. At other epochs, it appeared like a Utopia whose adherents greatly resembled the carbonari, men thirsting for a mystic ideal. It was but natural that in its search for true manifestation the spirit of revolt should work blindly and even deviate from the right path, and its apostles, instead of preaching a gospel of justice and idealism, seem, like Erostrates of old, only anxious to destroy out of sheer love of destruction and revenge. Yet it is always so; those upon whom the spirit has descended will always appear either apostles or savages to the world.

In old Russia, the Russia of Rurik, the Russia of princes and appanages, the institutions were distinctly democratic, even republican. This was especially so in the North-Western provinces and in such commercial centres as Pskov and Novgorod.

The population was divided into small, rural communities; towns were few and only distinguished from the villages by their wooden enclosures. Each community consisted of the descendants of one family, thus possessing the land in common and all obeying the patriarchal authority of the head of the family, called the *elder*. It was a patriarchal system, or one might say, *monarchic en miniature*, which was limited by the authority of "the whole world" (*vessj mir*), *i.e.* of all the inhabitants. The social organisation of the cities and towns was exactly similar to that of the rural communities, and the power of the princes was counterbalanced by that of the general assembly of all the urban inhabitants, known as the *vetshe*. There was no distinction between the urban and rural inhabitants, or peasants; neither was there any privileged class in old Russia; there was only the people and a princely family descended from Rurik.

The members of this family parcelled out the whole of Russia among themselves. The state was divided into appanages, each governed by a prince under the supremacy of the eldest member of the family, who bore the title of Grand Prince. His appanage was first Kiev, then later Vladimir and Moscow. The power and authority which the Grand Prince could exert over the other princes was quite insignificant. Nominally, the lesser princes recognised the supremacy of the Grand Prince, but, in reality, they were but little dependent upon him, and there was absolutely no administrative centralisation. Again, the appanages were not the individual property of the prince, for he often passed from one appanage to another. The prince was surrounded by his companions in

arms, who constituted a kind of aristocracy, which was, however, recruited from the people. The idea of an aristocratic class had been brought to Russia by the Varangians, or Normans, but the Slavonic spirit modified that idea according to its own patriarchal and democratic notions. The title of *boyarin* was not hereditary, and conferred no special privilege. The power of the prince was not by any means absolute, though it later became so in Moscow. The prince was merely the elder of a great number of towns and villages over which he ruled conjointly with the general assemblies. His only advantage was that his post was not elective; the dignity was hereditary. The prince was the chief magistrate of his appanage. In a word, Russia in those early days was a federated state with a homogeneous population, practically without class distinction and with all property held under the communal system. This organisation was certainly not inferior to that existing in other European states before the fourteenth century. On the contrary, the Russian people really enjoyed more freedom, both individual and collective, than did their fellows in feudal Europe.

Thus, in the majority of Russian principalities, the prince was a strictly constitutional ruler, if one may apply this epithet to a time when the idea of a constitution was far from having been clearly defined in the minds of the people. In any case the prince never took any important step without previously consulting the popular assembly. Gradually the princes of Kiev extended their sway over the other principalities, but this was chiefly because the Russian principalities felt themselves

unable to cope single handed with their foreign foes, especially the Greek of Tsargrad, Byzantium or Constantinople. The latter had the advantages of civilisation, science and, above all, centralisation. The old democratically inclined Slavs, who had invited the Varangian princes to come and bring order into their vast lands, felt that Rurik and his descendants had given them but a small degree of cohesion. Byzantium, they said, was strong because it had but one Cæsar and one faith, and because the entire nation was grouped round one holy dynasty.

Yet it was not the real Russian nation, the old Slavs, the democratic communities, that cast such longing eyes at the Byzantine institutions; they were quite happy, and would have remained so, with their paganism, their vetshes and communal régime. It was rather the ardent wish of the princes of Kiev, who were anxious to strengthen their power and to introduce into the land of the Slavs the Cæsarism of Byzantium. The idea of the divine law of the ruler also existed among their near neighbours the Poles, Lithuanians, Germans, Bulgarians and Khosars, all converted either to Catholicism, Islam or Judaism, but nowhere was it so strongly developed as at Constantinople; nowhere else was the union between the spiritual and the temporal so close and so strong.[1]

One day, thought the holy Vladimir, I, too, shall be an autocrat like the Cæsar of Byzantium, and know no other law, no superior will, except the abstract one of the Trinity. Henceforth, I shall be above the Russian communities, and no

[1] Cf. V. Bérard, *l.c.*, 1905, p. 88.

vetshe or popular assembly shall dare to contradict my will or invoke ancient privileges or customs. I shall be, like the Cæsars of Constantinople, the absolute ruler, and should the people dare revolt, I shall not only draw my sword but also hurl against them the thunders of the Church; threaten them not only with punishment in this world, but also with damnation in the next for having dared to disobey the anointed of the Lord. In the Catholic religion, the temporal rulers have to submit to the Pope, whilst in the Byzantine Church the inheritor of Constantinople is the supreme head of both State and Church.[1]

This splendid religion could hardly fail to appeal to the Varangian prince, however uncongenial it might be to the democratic, joyous and pagan masses of the Slavs. That this statement is true, history has abundantly proved. On the one hand, the Greek religion has never really penetrated the Russian masses; for centuries they remained pagans at heart and merely practised the forms of the religion superficially. On the other hand, the princes of Kiev, and above all the Tsars of Moscow, both before and after Peter the Great, have regularly drawn their strength and their power, the power of autocracy, from their Byzantine religion. Thus the orthodox faith appealed to the Princes of Kiev, since it was the only religion that, like the ancient Greek paganism, subordinated ecclesiastical authority to the temporal power.

In Islam, Judaism and Catholicism it was just the reverse. Vladimir, when he embraced Byzantine Christianity, was not so much struck by the

[1] Bérard, *l.c.*, p. 290.

benefits of the religion as by the service it could render the development and increase of autocracy. Vaguely, this Russian Constantine, this holy monarch, this artistic pagan, was already dreaming of the autocratic power which his successors would one day wield and carry to its utmost consummation. Passive obedience and monastic discipline were thus introduced into Russia. Truly writes Herzen: "Byzantium brought Russia to sad and degrading times; it blessed and sanctioned all coercive measures against the liberty of the people. It taught the Tsars Byzantine despotism, it prescribed and ordained to the people a blind obedience and a complete resignation." [1] In the abyss of Byzantium the individualism of Russian nationality was lost, for a time at least. Russian energy and *joie de vivre*, independence and personality were thus carried to the grave to the sound of Byzantine Church music and with Byzantine funeral rites.[2]

Whilst in Western Europe, the struggle between Empire and Papacy was a long and desperate one, in Russia the Byzantine clergy, in accordance with Byzantine teaching, were the very prop and mainstay of autocracy. Thus the introduction of the Greek religion into Russia laid the first foundations of autocracy in the principality of Kiev, and upon which the Tsars of Moscow built up the edifice of Tsardom, so hostile to the principles of Slavonic democracy and liberalism. The influence of Byzantium, great as it had been at Kiev, became even more powerful at Moscow. To a certain extent it increased as Moscow grew stronger and

[1] *Du Développement*, *l.c.*, p. 109.
[2] Cf. Rappoport, *History of Russia*, London, 1905, p. 40.



TSAR PETER THE GREAT.

extended its sway. When Ivan III married Sophia Palæologus he began to look upon himself as the heir of the Greek Cæsars from whom the Turks had wrested Constantinople.[1]

Another factor favourable to the establishment and growth of autocracy in Russia was the Mongol invasion. Internally, Russia remained as before, for the Khans ruled from a distance; they exacted an unconditional submission, but very rarely did they interfere in the internal administration of the countries under their dominion. The Khans only knew the local princes. However, though the Khans left the internal organisation in Russia untouched, their invasion was nevertheless a terrible blow to Russian democratic and liberal institutions. The continual devastations exhausted the people and drove them away from the ruined towns and villages into the woods and forests. Persecuted, oppressed and intimidated, the Slavs acquired the psychology of the continually oppressed, the spirit of servility which the Princes of Moscow later used for their own personal benefit. Those very Princes of Moscow who developed Russian autocracy began by themselves adopting a servile attitude towards the Tartar Khans of the Golden Horde. As their reward they were appointed the general tribute-collectors for their masters, the Khans. They were authorised, aided by the Tartar Baskaks, to collect the tribute from all the provinces subject to the Tartar sway. Thus the authority of the Princes of Moscow naturally increased. Moreover, since Kiev was

[1] It is upon this marriage that the Russian Tsars have based their historic claims to Constantinople. Historically they have no other claim and no other right.

sacked by the Tartars, the Metropolitan of the orthodox Church had no fixed residence; he now established himself in Moscow, which town at once became the ecclesiastical capital of Russia, an event of far-reaching importance for the development of autocracy.

A few years later, the Princes of Moscow built the famous Troitza monastery in the vicinity of the town; the prior, Sergius, was the great ally of the prince and ably supported him in all his autocratic designs. Then when Dmitry Donskoi defeated the Tartars and was blessed by the holy Sergius, the alliance between the Greek Church and autocracy was definitely sealed. Henceforth the Greek Orthodox Church became the firm supporter of autocracy, whilst the latter followed a policy of persecution and intolerance towards all heretics, *i.e.* those who did not accept the doctrines of the orthodox Church. Having grown rich while squeezing their subjects for the benefit of the Tartar Khans, the Princes of Moscow extended their territory by either acquiring or conquering neighbouring principalities. Thus they not only increased their possessions and power, but they also crushed the ancient, popular and democratic institutions that distinguished mediæval Russia.[1]

Yet even until the fifteenth century the struggle between the autocratic tendencies of Moscow and the ancient democratic spirit of Russia was still going on. It was a question as to which of the two principles would conquer in the end: the Prince or the community; the aristocratic state of Moscow or the Republic of Novgorod. Nov-

[1] Cf. M. Kovalevski, *L'Evolution des libertés publiques en Russie*, Paris, 1905, p. 5.

gorod, once freed from the yoke of the Tartars, quickly developed its ancient democratic institutions and became rich, powerful and flourishing. It was a bitter struggle, that struggle between Democracy and Absolutism, and Moscow, the principle of autocracy, conquered. Her Princes won the title of "Tsars of all the Russias," and Tsardom, the enemy of liberty, of democracy, of independence, made its appearance. Constantinople fell under the sway of the Turks; the two-headed eagle, exiled from Tsargrad, found a resting-place upon the flag of Moscow, and the Greek clergy devoted itself to the task of byzantinising Russia.

The people suddenly found themselves faced by a Tsar, by an absolute monarch who was a stranger to them, a usurper, a conqueror who had gathered his strength in the shadow of the Khanate. He had become so powerful that he could ignore all the old privileges and customs of the people. If prince or city rebelled, he punished with the ferocity and cruelty that he had learned from the Mongols. But Novgorod still resisted him. "You tell us," said the ambassadors of Novgorod to Ivan III, "that we must obey the laws of Moscow, but we do not know the laws of Moscow." But in the end Novgorod was subdued,[1] And when, but little later, the Republic of Pskov fell under the sway of Ivan the Terrible, the popular assemblies ceased in Russia.

During the reign of Ivan Grozny, the Cruel, a lingering vestige of the limited power of the ruler could still be observed. Ivan, whilst fighting against the demands and privileges of the boyarins,

[1] Cf. Hertzen, *l.c.*, p. 21.

some of whom were the descendants of the reigning princes subdued and disinherited by the Princes of Moscow, convened the Semski Sobor or States General. They were, however, by no means a limitation of the autocratic power which was fast developing. On the contrary, autocracy found a support for its aspirations and ambitions in the principles of the *jus Romanum* then imported into Russia by the Greeks expelled from Constantinople. The Tsar decided to emancipate himself entirely from the control of the boyarins and the Moscow aristocracy, and it was therefore that he convened the Sobors, who counterbalanced the pretentions of the aristocracy.

The peasants, who had enjoyed liberty and even prosperity during the period of the appanages, gradually lost their freedom under the rule of Moscow. It was but natural that the development and growth of autocracy, the entire power vested in the ruler, should give rise to much discontent. This discontent has been smouldering for centuries. Various boyarins, descendants of Rurik and Guedimin, at different times, made endeavours to limit the power of autocracy, but all their efforts proved futile. Among the peasants, the masses, who were only thought of as the goods and chattels of their masters, this discontent was universal. Jacqueries and peasant risings became frequent. Among the chief supporters of such risings were the Cossacks, who, paradoxical as it may sound, were the first and fiercest opponents of autocracy. The Cossacks were the first Republicans in Russia. A glance at their history will convince the reader that this statement is no exaggeration. Thus the peasants and the Cos-

sacks were always to be found on the side of those who were likely to introduce liberal and democratic principles into Russia. They supported the first false Dimitri and rose against Tsar Shuiski, when the latter endeavoured to strengthen the power of the boyarins at the expense and to the detriment of the people.

Yet at the beginning of the seventeenth century it really seemed as if Moscow were going to inaugurate an era of liberty congenial to the ancient spirit of the Slavs. This was in 1613, after a period of trouble and national distress, when Mikhail Romanov ascended the throne. The new Tsar made certain concessions and promised many reforms on his ascension. These promises, however, did not affect either the peasants or the landed nobility; they were solely in favour of the so-called serving nobility; their prerogatives were increased and the foundations of the later bureaucracy laid. The Duma of the boyarins was suppressed and the lot of the peasants and serfs became almost unbearable. This state of affairs grew worse during the reign of Alexis Mikhailovitsh, when the autocracy regained all its former power, which it was destined to hold for another three centuries.

By this time, discontent was not only rampant among the people, but was also at home in the orthodox Church. As we have seen, in the beginning the orthodox Church was the staunch supporter of autocratic power, but in the course of time it grew weary of the yoke, and jealous too. It was ready to take advantage of any opportunity to shake off the temporal supremacy of the Tsar. When such an opportunity at last came, in March

1917, the world was astonished to see how eagerly and anxiously the Russian Church greeted freedom. But it was not a surprise to those who knew the great discontent that had lain dormant within the orthodox Church.

The silent discontent of the Church, and its struggle for emancipation and freedom, may be traced back to the beginning of the seventeenth century. The Russian orthodox Church tasted the first sweets of power during the reign of Mikhail Romanov, when the Tsar's father Philarete was appointed Patriarch and assisted his son in the government of the country. The Church was naturally anxious to exercise the same preponderating influence even after the death of Philarete, but the Tsars, the successors of Mikhail Romanov, resented it. From this struggle between Church and State the latter emerged victorious, and then once more the former became subservient and dependent, and an apparent supporter of autocracy. But within the walls of the monasteries and sacred edifices the spirit of revolt had found a home, and there it continued to brood and bide its time. Patriarch Nikon, indeed, made an attempt to seize power and make the Church independent of autocracy; this led to the *Raskol.* Since then the spirit of Nikon has whispered to many a church dignitary; the spirit of revolution thus permeated the very atmosphere where autocracy lived and had its being. This explains the alacrity with which the Church, that Church which so many superficial writers on Russia—"Russia of stained glass and holy ikons"—considered to be the very prop of Tsardom, hastened to join the recent Revolution. It not only denied

the ex-Tsar Nicholas, but also the very principle of autocracy.

The spirit of revolt also manifested itself during the reign of Alexis in the form of popular risings and Jacqueries, but more especially in the revolt of the Cossacks under the leadership of Stenka Razin, the famous robber. Yet, was Stenka Razin an opponent of autocracy? Apparently he only fought against the boyarins, the seigneurs and officials who, as the peasants maintained, were keeping the Tsar a prisoner. But what were his ultimate aims? There are certain indications in his attitude that seem to show that he, like the other Cossacks, cared but little for the authority of the Tsar. Stenka's reply to the Tsar's messenger that "if the Tsar wished a reply he should write his letter himself"; the rumour, which the rebel himself spread, that he had Patriarch Nikon, who was then in disgrace, in his camp; it all tends to show that this leader of revolt was not only fighting against the boyarins but also the Tsar himself. In any case, the religious revolt of the Raskolniks and the risings of the peasants and the Cossacks all met with the same fate. They were all mercilessly crushed. The persecutions of the Raskolniks were marked with the cruelty and bloodthirstiness, and the stoicism and heroism which characterise all religious movements and persecutions. The sufferings of the Raskolniks at the hands of the autocracy add but one more chapter to the blood-stained history of crimes committed in the name of religion.

The Russian people were oppressed more and more until their situation became almost unbearable; this was especially so after Peter the Great

had introduced his reforms, and strengthened the power of the Russian bureaucracy on the model of that of Germany. The Semski Sobors have never ceased to exist in Russia, *de jure*, but *de facto*, the Tsars, especially since 1698, have ceased to convene them. Peter the Great Europeanised Russia. That is perfectly true, but Peter, above all, was anxious to strengthen autocracy. He continued the work of Vladimir the Holy and the Tsars of Moscow. "Peter did not disdain either the sword of the Varangian Prince or the Cross of Byzantium, or even the methods of the Mongols, the means by which autocracy had established its power in Russia. He but added another weapon to those employed by his predecessors to subdue the Russian democratic soul; this weapon was the pen of the bureaucrat." [1]

Peter the Great drew his inspiration from the autocratic institutions of France as they existed in the days of Richelieu. "If I had had the good luck," said Russia's great reformer when standing before Richelieu's tomb, "to come across such a Cabinet Minister, I would gladly have presented him with half my kingdom on condition that he would teach me how to govern the other half." He found no Russian Richelieu, so he imported Richelieu's bureaucratic principles, those principles that garrotted France until 1789, into Russia. It must also be borne in mind that it was the German philosopher Leibnitz who was largely responsible for Peter's reforms and who urged the Tsar to introduce the bureaucratic régime into Russia. It has taken the Russian people two centuries fully to appreciate this service that Ger-

[1] Bérard, *l.c.*, p. 316.

many once rendered them. I admit that Peter was a revolutionary, a Jacobin on the throne of the Tsars, yet, if he worked for Russian civilisation, he also worked, and chiefly, for the benefit of his dynasty, for Imperialism as opposed to democracy. Russia could not follow him, *would* not follow him, because the soul of Russia is naturally democratic. Napoleon raised France to the summit of glory, but France had become democratic and had learned to hate Imperialism. It felt instinctively that Imperialism is the glory of the dynasty, of the ruling classes, but not of democracy. Democracy and Imperialism can never work hand in hand, for the one means the negation of the other.

This Imperial idea, originated by Peter and continued by Catherine II, was utilised in the service of Tsardom against the people. The reforms were not a goal, but a means to the strengthening of Tsardom and absolutism. The people became inanimate material, and the aristocracy a willing tool in the hands of Tsardom. But the spirit of revolt was not dead; it arose among the boyarins, and expressed itself in their palace revolutions; the method was ancient and mediaeval, but methods change with the times. They reminded Tsardom of Russia's Magna Charta: "La tyrannie tempérée par l'assassinat." It may be said that the Russian aristocracy, after Razin and Pougatshev, found a more memorable method in 1762 and 1801, when Peter III and Paul I were throttled, to teach future terrorists how to wage war against Tsars when they refused to listen to peaceful demands. That was the spirit of revolt as expressed by the boyarins.

Thus Peter the Great's abandonment, to a cer-

tain extent, of Byzantine culture—and leaving a way of entrance for German kultur—not only hopelessly alienated the Russian people from autocracy and widened the existing gulf between them, but also gave a new stimulus to the spirit of revolt which was but waiting for an opportunity to settle accounts with Tsardom. Peter surrounded himself with foreigners who helped him, not to govern, but to oppress, rob and deceive the nation. Bureaucracy, recruited from among the German adventurers, became the servant of autocracy, and the oppressor and enemy of the people, who hated both the servant and the master, but by its very powerlessness was condemned to silence. The more hostile and rotten the official state machinery became, the stronger grew the revolutionary spirit. For two centuries the Russians could rightly lament and say: "And Germans rule over us. Our Tsars and Tsaritzas know us not, for they are strangers, usurpers, foreigners among us."

And the discontent among the peasants continued to grow; at the slightest opportunity there were peasant risings and Jacqueries. It was the accumulated feeling of popular consciousness struggling for manifestation. The antagonism between the people and its rulers, between the slaves and the oppressors, was becoming too great; autocracy had to thank the fatalism, the resignation which the Byzantine religion had taught the Russian people, that it was allowed to remain in power for another century or two. When the antagonism finally reached its summit, when the revolutionary forces were at last fully organised, there was nothing that could save the Tsars from their destiny.

During the reign of Catherine II the spirit of revolt manifested itself frequently among the peasants. In 1773 Catherine's throne seemed suddenly to totter. The threatened danger was the revolt of Pougatshev, who was joined by the discontented peasants, Cossacks and Raskolniks. The revolt was quelled with much bloodshed, and the friend of Voltaire and Diderot availed herself of this pretext to put an end to the military republics of the Cossacks on the Dnieper, and to destroy their Sietsh. When the French Revolution broke out, the Tsaritza saw in it a danger to autocracy, and immediately all her so-called liberalism disappeared as if by magic. Perhaps she foresaw that the example of France would sooner or later be followed in Russia, where, the revolutionary forces having taken longer to develop and evolve, the great upheaval would be the more radical. "As soon as Catherine heard of the French Revolution," writes Sorel,[1] "she hated it." "Cette révolution heurtait ses idées, contrariait ses passions, gênait sa politique." A constitutional monarch, to Catherine, was only an "allié en peinture." The French assembly was but a hydra with twelve hundred heads, and she despised the King who permitted himself to be dictated to by those bourgeois. Knout and mines could not eradicate such tendencies.[2] This German princess on the Russian throne was more autocratic than any autocrat. The French Revolution and the revolt of Pougatshev were two

[1] Cf. Albert Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution Française*, vol. ii, p. 32.

[2] Cf. also Ch. de Larivière, *Catherine II et la Révolution Française*.

spectres which she could never forget. From a so-called liberal, the Empress became a reactionary, an upholder of autocracy and absolutism. She who had dreamt of reforms, of the emancipation of the serfs and of convening a National Assembly, became the persecutor of the liberalism that was raising its voice in Russia. For it was during the reign of Catherine that the Russian spirit of revolt that lay dormant in the people and struggled to manifest itself, that occasionally with sheer brutal force revealed itself by a Palace Revolution, an assassination, a revolt, an insurrection, peasant risings and Jacqueries, first became articulate. Henceforth it grew and crystallised, expressed itself first in words, and later in deeds.

Such is the history of the creation of all great movements as well as of the revolutionary movement in Russia. Since the reign of Catherine the spirit of revolt in Russia has expressed itself in songs and satires, and also in history, philosophy and sociology. In a subsequent chapter, The Poets, Philosophers and Sociologists, I shall treat of the share taken by the thinkers, poets, philosophers and prophets in the Russian Revolution, and the place they hold among the pioneers. Suffice it here to say that the stimulus which the spirit of revolt in Russia received from abroad, and especially from France, soon manifested itself in an organised insurrection, which, unfortunately, was premature and therefore failed. It was the insurrection of the Decembrists, the work of officers and aristocrats. It failed because it was the conspiracy of but one discontented group. Like the Palace Revolutionaries of 1762 and 1801, the officers and nobles who throttled Peter III and

Paul I, the Decembrists were men of noble birth. The only difference was, that in the course of time these seigneurs had adopted new ideas, had become ideal-political dreamers, instead of real-political. The Palace Revolutionaries of 1762 and 1801 only desired to satisfy a personal vengeance, to effect a change, to put one Tsar in place of another upon the throne, but the Decembrists aimed at a political revolution.

CHAPTER IV

THE DECEMBRISTS

THE Napoleonic wars of 1813–1814 had a far-reaching effect upon the development of political ideas in Russia. During their sojourn in Paris the Russian officers, recruited among the most educated and idealistically inclined nobility, had familiarised themselves with Western civilisation and culture. They were deeply impressed by the difference between the old political system prevalent in Russia and the liberal and democratic institutions of the West. The constitutional government of Western Europe greatly attracted them, and made them feel ashamed for their own country, for Russia humiliated, as it were, by the yoke of autocracy. The officers returned home with their minds full of new conceptions and varied political ideas that were then but little known in Russia. What they saw in their own country then filled them with discontent and disgust. On the one hand, they saw an arbitrary, despotic government, and, on the other, oppressed, enslaved and poverty-stricken masses. This discontent spread in the army, from the generals down to the soldiers.

"We have shed our blood in the service of the country," murmured these latter, "and now we are made to work for the seigneurs. We have

saved the country from a foreign tyrant, and, as a reward for our services, we are being tyrannised over by the seigneurs and by our own Government." And the young officers who had returned from abroad also could not remain silent spectators of the general misery and the deplorable state of affairs.

They began to organise circles and clubs where they read philosophical and sociological works and discussed political ideas and questions. They eagerly read those foreign papers that dealt with the struggle of the Opposition against the Government in the constitutional assemblies of the West. How anxious these Russians were to see such a fight for freedom, such political activity at work in their own country! A positive fever of liberalism seized young Russia; the revolutionary and liberal principles which, to the Russians, accustomed as they were to oppression, autocracy and bureaucracy, seemed to have been realised in the West, were accepted with enthusiasm by the Russian youth. "Since the return of the Russian armies from the West," writes Nicholas Tourgeniev,[1] "liberal ideas are beginning to propagate themselves very rapidly in Russia."

Full of a high sense of their own personal dignity, the young officers were anxious to play a prominent rôle in the regeneration of their country. They had helped to liberate France from the tyranny of Napoleon, yet a more shameful tyranny existed in their own Russia. They had helped to set a strange house in order; was it not high time to set their own house in order? Their eyes had been opened. They found absolute despotism

[1] *La Russie et les Russes*, Paris, 1847, vol. i, pp. 94–5.

holding its sway through all classes of Russian society. Araktsheev ruled supreme, the Government oppressed the nation, the officials treated the civilians like so many servants. The officials were not appointed for the people; the latter seemed to exist solely for the benefit of the former. The majority of the Russian people were still dishonoured by the yoke of serfdom; legislation was in a state of chaos, the law devoid of sanction, and its exact application compromised by the arbitrariness and the venality of the officials.[1]

"The officers and other military men," writes Tourgeniev, "who had visited foreign countries related what they had seen abroad and attracted public attention by their freedom of manner, especially in speech and general behaviour."[2] But not only the officers, even the common soldiers had come into contact with other troops—men who were used to a different kind of discipline, and they, too, began to feel that something was wrong in Russia, and that a change was urgently needed. The innate craving of the Slav for liberty was aroused; the spirits of Pougatshev and Stenka Rasin seemed to beckon to the Russian peasant and soldier to rise and throw off the shackles of thraldom, of Byzantine autocracy and German bureaucracy, and to re-introduce the old, free institutions of the ancient Slavs.

A propaganda of, as yet, a vague and hazy liberalism spread among the youth of Russia; their young brains seethed with new ideas. These young enthusiasts foregathered to discuss plans of reform and to devise means of carrying them into

[1] Cf. *Rousskaya Starina*, 1884, vol. xiii, p. 31 ff.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 81–4.



TSAR PAUL I



MICHAEL SPERANSKI.

effect. While abroad they had learnt about and made the acquaintance of various secret societies. It must be remembered that even in the West real liberal thought, both religious and political, was for a long time confined to a small circle of adepts who met each other in secret, and were thus able to prepare their plans without being exposed to the vulgar contempt of a populace still too ignorant to comprehend them.

This example was followed in Russia, and various secret societies were established. The need for them was even greater than in the West. These societies became very numerous; but, at any rate at first, the majority of them were quite inoffensive; they were secret only in name, for they were not at all hostile to the supreme authority.[1] They never went beyond discussions, for their faith in Alexander's liberalism was still great, and they firmly believed that the Tsar would soon grant Russia a constitution. This hope, however, was soon frustrated.

Alexander I, a pupil of Laharpe, had gathered round him a bevy of young men seething with ideas for a regeneration of Russia. The ideal of the men who had for some time influenced the Tsar was to establish a national and representative government. From 1806 to 1812, the man who exercised the most preponderating influence over Alexander I was Michael Speransky, the son of a village priest and a professor of mathematics and philosophy. For some time, Speransky, who had become Secretary of State, enjoyed the full confidence of the Tsar to whom he submitted a plan of reforms extending to the legislative,

[1] Puipin, *l.c.*, pp. 511–14; Rappoport, *l.c.*, p. 378.

adminsitrative and judicial powers of Russia. He had a great admiration for French institutions, and this fact gave his enemies a pretext to denounce him as a traitor when Russia was on the verge of war with France. Speransky was suddenly arrested and sent to Nijny Novgorod. He was liberated in 1816, and reinstated in favour, but he never regained his former position.

The fall of Speransky, on the one hand, and the war with Napoleon on the other, put an end to all talk of reform. The enemies of Speransky were in power; Karamzin, the great historian, made himself the champion of autocracy.[1] Then Araktsheev, the Pobiedonostzev at the beginning of the ninteenth century, the sworn enemy of all new ideas and reforms, the champion of absolutism and autocracy, became all-powerful. After his return from France the Tsar continued to favour Araktsheev, and it was on the latter's advice that military colonies were first introduced into Russia: a system borrowed from Austria. The peasants opposed this measure, and revolts broke out, which were quelled with extraordinary severity.

Alexander had been greeted in Europe as the "liberator of nations" and a "restorer of peace!" But, alas, "liberators of nations" are not always the friends of real liberty, and "restorers of peace" often shed oceans of blood. At best, Alexander's liberal ideas had only been a pose, and his taste for constitutional governments resembled that of a dilettante who goes into ecstasies over a beautiful picture. Napoleon and Metternich had exercised

[1] Cf. A. S. Rappoport, *The Curse of the Romanovs*, pp. 370–3.

a deep influence upon him: they had laboured to prove to him the futility of his generous ideas.

After his second visit to Paris, the Tsar's reactionary policy became more and more manifest. He had concluded the Holy Alliance. Ostensibly it was a treaty signed by three sovereigns who solemnly promised "to govern their subjects in the spirit of Christianity and to be guided by the principles of justice, love and peace." In reality, however, it was a league of rulers against their subjects, against the hydra-head of democracy and revolution. A league of sovereigns, of rulers, of governments, no matter whether they be termed Autocrats, Tsars, Kaisers, monarchs, or even oligarchic republics, are edifices whose foundations have been laid on quicksand. All such treaties have, as a general rule, proved to be merely a "scrap of paper," and have never been the foundation of real, permanent peace: this can only be secured as the result of a treaty concluded by a "league of nations" or a "confraternity of men." But when I say "a league of nations" or a "confraternity of men" I do not mean treaties concluded by a dozen or more statesmen or diplomatists who pretend to speak in the name of peoples or nations, but treaties in the drawing up of which the nations have had a hand, which represent their wishes and desires after due opportunity has been given them to express these, for one must clearly distinguish between a real league of nations and a league of statesmen, all belonging to the wealthy and governing classes. The gulf between the interests of the governing and the governed classes, between Capital and Labour, has not yet been bridged.

The Holy Alliance, concluded by three sovereigns in the name of Christianity, justice and peace, proved the cause of injustice, reaction and war for the coming century. It became a league of rulers against the nations.[1] The Tsar was entirely under the influence of Araktsheev, Austria, and Metternich. The revolutionary spirit in Europe was raising its wings; the sovereigns, anxious to preserve their power, grew alarmed, and governments became animated by a movement of reaction. It was chiefly Austria which initiated the re-establishment of the ancient régime of absolute monarchy.[2] The Tsar now opposed every effort of his subjects towards liberalism, and endeavoured to nip in the bud the feeble blossom, the seeds of which he himself had helped to sow. He showed himself the champion of absolute monarchy and autocracy. Forgotten were all his early promises, forgotten the dreams of his youth. He had granted a constitution to Poland, but the Poles soon learnt that the promises of an autocrat, be his title Tsar or Kaiser, to grant reforms, freedom or independence, are mere soap-bubbles. These rulers of millions simply put the beverage of oppression into bottles and label it "freedom." The label cannot deceive the consumer once he has tasted the much-advertised drink. But in justice to autocrats I must add that this statement may frequently be applied to constitutional and democratic governments.

Alexander's reactionary tendencies became even more noticeable in the Congresses of Aix-la-Chapelle,

[1] Cf. Puipin, *Die geistigen Bewegungen in Russland*, Berlin, 1894, p. 543.
[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 618–19.

Troppau, Laybach, Verona, and Vienna. He abandoned the cause of Greece in the interests of European diplomacy, and, instead of becoming the protector of the freedom of Greece, he refused to favour the insurrection of his brothers in religion.[1] The European governments, writes Madame Choiseul-Gouffier, saw in the efforts of the Greeks to recover their independence a dangerous revolutionary spirit; a spirit which, for forty years, had been working to undermine the thrones of Europe and "to overthrow the powers established by law and by divine sanction." For the sake of this divine sanction the Tsar sacrificed the independence of Greece.[2]

"Alexander," writes Puipin, "became, in fact, the leader of European reaction, and not only did he show himself the enemy of the liberal aspirations of the Italians and Spaniards, but Russian troops played the rôle of gendarmes in the service of the absolute monarchies of Europe."[3] The reactionary evolution in the mind of the Tsar was hastened by two events. His agent Kotzebue was assassinated by Maurice Sand and his favourite regiment of the Semeonovsky Guards mutinied as the result of the cruel treatment meted out to it by its colonel, a German named Schwartz. The Tsar was then at Troppau, and Metternich craftily availed himself of this latter incident to prove to the Tsar the crass absurdity of allowing his subjects even the semblance of liberty.

The natural result of Alexander's attitude was a steady increase of the brooding discontent, and

[1] Cf. Rappoport, *l.c.*, p. 380.
[2] Cf. Choiseul-Gouffier, *Mémoires*, Paris, 1829, pp. 300–8.
[3] Puipin, *l.c.*, p. 625.

also the reconstruction on a new basis of the secret societies. The "Society of Virtue," which later developed into the "Northern and Southern Leagues," was one of the most famous of these secret organisations during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. This society was the idea of a few officers; at first, they merely intended to form a sort of *Tugendbund*, a group of highly honest people who would make it their life's work to oppose injustice and oppression. In 1816, the idea was still being discussed, but in 1817 it was finally realised and the society formed. The first members were: Prince Troubetzkvy, Prince Lopukhin, A. Mouraviev, N. Mouraviev, Glinka, Shipov, Novikov, Lunin and Colonel Pestel. This group was called, according to some, the "Society of the true and faithful Sons of the Fatherland," and, according to others, "the League of Virtue." At first the members of this society devoted themselves wholly to the burning question of the emancipation of the serfs, and tried to induce the nobility to approach the Tsar about it. Convinced that the reactionary nobility would never consent to such a measure, the League adopted the policy of introducing a constitutional monarchy into Russia. Pestel elaborated the rules and statutes of the society, which showed many traces of Masonic influence. This first League had but a very short existence; it was dissolved in 1818.

In its place a new League with the following objects, according to A. Mouraviev, was founded: (1) The abolition of serfdom; (2) Equality of all citizens before the law; (3) Publicity of State business; (4) Abolition of the alcohol monopoly; (5) The amelioration of the fate of the defenders

of the country; (6) The amelioration of the status of the clergy, etc. The chief aims of the League were the "general welfare," and, above all, the abolition of autocracy and the introduction of a representative government. This new group, or League, endeavoured to recruit its members chiefly from the army, especially the superior officers who were in a position to propagate their liberal ideas in their regiments. But even this new League was but a feeble affair; it only numbered fifty-six members. It was divided into the Northern and the Southern Leagues. The former was in favour of a constitutional monarchy, whilst the latter, influenced by Pestel, desired a republic. Under these circumstances quarrels soon arose between the members, some of whom promptly demanded the League should be dissolved.

In 1821 a meeting was held at Moscow, and the members were then informed by Theodor Glinka, adjutant of Miloradovitsh, Governor-General of St. Petersburg, that the Government were aware of the existence of the society. This was a new reason for its dissolution, and, in accordance with the demands of several of the members, it was formally stated that the League was no more. As a matter of fact, however, this was merely a ruse to get rid of the irresolute members; though officially dissolved, the League was reconstructed and continued its activities at St. Petersburg as the Northern League, and at Tultshin as the Southern League. The Southern League was practically under the leadership of Pestel, whilst the Northern League was influenced by Troubetzkoy, Mouraviev, Obolenski and Ryleev. The Northerners believed that the first steps should be devoted to propa-

ganda, whilst the Southerners preferred drastic measures and definite activity. "Les demi-mésures," wrote Pestel, "ne valent rien, içi nous voulons avoir maison nette."

In 1824, Pestel arrived at St. Petersburg and declared himself very dissatisfied with the work of his colleagues. He again urged more decisive measures, briefly: the extermination of all the members of the Imperial family; the compelling the Senate and the Holy Synod to recognise the Secret Society as the Provisional Government; the demanding that the people, the army and the navy should take the oath of allegiance to the Provisional Government, and thus gradually, in the course of a few years, introduce a new order of things. But such measures greatly displeased the members of the Northern League, especially N. Mouraviev, who, therefore, strenuously opposed the amalgamation of the two Leagues. The result, naturally, was a lack of unity and common policy fatal to any thought of effective revolution.

The two Leagues could never agree on certain questions; for instance, as to the fate that should befall the members of the Imperial family. After they had decided upon the convocation of a Constitutional Assembly, Ryleev once asked his colleagues: "But suppose the Emperor refuses to sanction the Constitution elaborated by the representatives of the nation, what then? Shall we send him abroad?" "That would be the best way," replied Troubetzkoy. Others, however, were of the opinion that such a step would prove very dangerous for the future; it would be much wiser to keep the Imperial family in the Winter

Palace, where it would be possible to keep an eye upon them. "No," replied Ryleev; "that would not do at all; it would be better for us to conduct them to Schluesselburg, where they could be guarded by the old Semeonovsky regiment, and then, in case of a counter-revolution, we could follow the example of Mirovitsh."

Yet the majority of the conspirators objected both to the plan of sending the Imperial family into exile, or of keeping them prisoners at Schluesselburg. They preferred to exterminate the entire Romanov family, and at last even Ryleev, who at first had strenuously opposed such a solution, admitted that it would be in the best interests of the country. They reasoned that the mere assassination of the Emperor would only bring about confusion, divergence of opinion and, finally, a popular revolution in favour of one or other member of the Imperial family. The absolute disappearance of all the members of the Imperial family, and thus of all pretenders to the Crown, would naturally lead to the establishment of a republic. Despite all this, certain writings of various members of the Secret League, such as the memoirs of Davydov, one of the most intimate friends of Pestel, prove that the talk of exterminating the Imperial family was mere revolutionary chatter, that in reality the conspirators did not believe such a step necessary; they would have been quite satisfied with the mere expulsion of the Romanovs from Russia.

Towards the end of 1824, Jakubovitsh, a guard officer, returned from the Caucasus, where, while valiantly fighting against the Georgian mountaineers, he had been wounded. Jakubovitsh was

not only dissatisfied with but had a personal grudge against the Government and the Tsar; his services had not been sufficiently rewarded. Alexander Bestyoushev introduced Jakubovitsh to Ryleev, Prince Obolenski and a few other members of the League. The guard officer told them in confidence that he had decided to assassinate the Tsar, since he believed that by so doing he would render a greater service to his country than a host of theorising conspirators would ever do. Although the members of the League had often discussed not only the assassination of the Tsar but that of his entire family, this emphatic declaration seemed to crush them. As I have said, their discussions were merely revolutionary phraseology, and therefore, when some one declared himself ready to become a regicide in fact, the regicides *en théorie* were startled.

It is an odd fact, but even a little study of the history of human thought and action will prove its truth, that few of the adherents of great social, political and religious movements are men of action; this is especially true of all revolutionary movements; the majority are but adherents in theory, platonic admirers and supporters as it were; and when their preaching and *confessions de foi* are put to the test, they are quite embarrassed. There are plenty of anarchists *en théorie* who talk largely of bomb-throwing and the employment of other violent means of gaining their object, but put these to the test of action and they are the first to wilt and hang back. There are equally as many upholders of great and noble ideals who proclaim, *urbi et orbi*, that they are filled with the spirit of altruism and a great love for humanity,

but who would be very uncomfortable if they were asked to practise what they so ardently preach.

Indeed, humanity is always either better or worse than it pretends to be. So it was with the Russian regicides; they were quite frightened when they were faced by brutal fact. True, they had discussed that very thing, but then they had discussed it as something that was to happen one day in the future, and therefore it was as well to familiarise oneself with the idea. Man often discusses death, but that does not prevent him, even the philosopher or the preacher, from turning pale when grim death at last looks him in the face. Ryleev, Obolenski and others endeavoured to dissuade Jakubovitsh from carrying out his plan. Ryleev even decided to denounce the would-be regicide to the Government. But Jakubovitsh was finally made to promise that he would not attempt it.

Meanwhile, the organisation, both the Northern and the Southern Leagues, went on discussing plans and means and the propitious moment for the revolution, but no one had the courage to take a step forward. Pestel alone, perhaps, saw clearly all the difficulties in front of them, and almost despaired of ever accomplishing anything. He once told his friend Lorer that he had decided to go to Taganrog, where the Tsar was then *en villegiatore*, tell him of the existence of the secret society and ask him to put an end to it and its probable future development by granting liberal institutions and a representative government to Russia. Lorer, however, persuaded Pestel that his plan was quite mad and very dangerous, and,

moreover, that he had no right to take such a step without consulting his colleagues and fellow-conspirators.

Another member of the society, however, Apostol Mouraviev, had decided to unfurl the banner of revolution at once. It was known that the Tsar was shortly to review the Third Army Corps: it was Mouraviev's idea that they should avail themselves of this occasion to assassinate their ruler; then they were to issue two proclamations, one to the army and the other to the nation, and begin the fight in good earnest. And while the Southern League was thus arranging matters, the Northern League at St. Petersburg were to arrest the Imperial family, send them over the frontier and proclaim a Provisional Government. Apostol Mouraviev, without consulting Pestel, sent Kornilovitsh to St. Petersburg with details of his plan to the members of the Northern League, but, despite his ardour, he could not make either of the societies feel ready for such measures. Discussions and contradictions arose that weakened the strength and unity of the organisation and made many of the members lose faith in any successful issue of the revolution. But the political situation that arose in consequence of Alexander's sudden death compelled the conspirators to unfurl their banner of revolution long before they had had time to complete their plan of action. As a matter of fact, Alexander had been aware of the existence of the society since 1825, reports having been regularly sent him by various spies. Yet he died, leaving no instructions how to deal with the conspirators and revolutionaries; it was left to Nicholas I, the Don Quixote of autocracy, to sit

in judgment upon the pioneers of the Russian Revolution.

Alexander's death opened the important question of the succession to the throne. Alexander had no male issue, but left three brothers—Constantine, aged fifty-nine, Viceroy of Poland, and Nicholas and Michael, who were about twenty years younger and had not known their grandmother Catherine. But Constantine had declared that he did not intend to accept the Crown, and Alexander had one day said to Nicholas and his wife: "You know full well that one day you will have to ascend the throne of Russia."

In 1820 Constantine had divorced his wife, a Princess of Coburg, and married morganatically a beautiful Polish lady, Jeanne Gredsinska, for whom he obtained the title of Princess Lowicz. On several occasions, also, he had informed his brothers Nicholas and Michael of his decision to refuse the Russian Crown. Then, in January 1822, he had written to Alexander and formally announced his decision: "I possess neither the genius, talent nor strength necessary for a sovereign," he stated in this letter. Nineteen days later the Emperor informed Constantine that both he and the Empress-Mother had accepted his abdication. These two letters, however, were kept secret, and were unknown even to Nicholas. Alexander then dictated a new Act, by which he appointed his brother Nicholas to be the successor to the throne. Four copies were made of this Act, which were secretly deposited, at the Holy Synod, the Senate, the Archives of the State Council and with Archbishop Philaret at the Church of the Assumption, Moscow. This secret was only known to the

Empress-Mother, to Araktsheev, Galitsyn and the Archbishop Philaret.

When the news of Alexander's death reached St. Petersburg, the first to take the oath of allegiance to the new Tsar Constantine was Nicholas. He did it at the instigation of Miloradovitsh, who declared he would not be responsible for the peace of the capital if Nicholas were to be proclaimed Tsar. "You know yourself," boldly declared Miloradovitsh, "that you are not liked." At the Imperial Council the question was brought up as to whether Alexander's secret instructions regarding his successor should be made public or no; it was the then Minister of Justice, Lobanov-Rostovski who decided that "Les morts n'ont pas de volonté." Yet all were not satisfied, and some of the members of the Imperial Council therefore visited the Winter Palace to ask Nicholas his view of the question. "Gentlemen," replied the Prince, "I advise you to follow my example and take the oath of allegiance to the new Emperor Constantine Pavlovitsh. I shall accept no other proposition and listen to no other suggestion." And thus it was that the Imperial Council took the oath of allegiance to the new Tsar.

In the meantime General Diebitsh had travelled to Warsaw to acquaint Constantine with the death of the Tsar. The new Tsar is supposed to have passed a sleepless night debating the question: To be or not to be—Tsar! He sent but a rude and gruff reply both to his brother and the President of the Imperial Council, but he did not formally abdicate or appoint a successor. New messengers were sent to him at Warsaw, to whom he gave other replies, but still no definite or formal in-

structions concerning the succession. The position was a very difficult one. Nicholas had taken the oath of allegiance to Constantine, who was very evidently disinclined to take up the burden of Tsardom. No one was even sure of the whereabouts of the new Emperor. Such was the state of affairs on December 14th. Nicholas looked after State affairs but did not appear in public.

Events, however, soon took a new turn. Diebitsh, while examining the papers of the late Emperor, came across data concerning the existence of a secret society pledged to overthrow autocracy. Alexander had known of this society since 1820, and in 1821 had issued instructions that it was to be suppressed, but from that time onwards seemed to have paid no further attention to the reports sent in to him regarding it. Diebitsh promptly sent a detailed report of the matter to Nicholas. That very day, sub-lieutenant Rostovtsev, who knew intimately many of the members of the Northern League, wrote a letter, which he personally handed in at the Winter Palace, in which he begged Nicholas not to accept the Crown, for he had many enemies and it would only mean trouble and confusion in the Empire, of which the inhabitants of Poland, Lithuania, Finland, Georgia and Bessarabia would naturally avail themselves in order to throw off Russia's domination.[1] Rostovtsev further advised Nicholas to go to Warsaw and personally endeavour to persuade his brother either to accept the Crown, or come at once to the capital, formally and publicly announce his abdication and appoint Nicholas as his successor. "If your Highness," continued Ros-

[1] *Russian Archives*, 1873, p. 449.

tovtsev, "considers I have been too daring, then I am ready to submit to the death sentence, but if your Highness finds that I am right, I ask for no other reward than your Highness's confidence." [1]

I have said that Rostovtsev had handed in his letter himself. As adjutant to General Bistrom he had been sent to the Palace with a parcel for Nicholas, who personally accepted it and retired to an adjoining room to examine it. When he opened the package he discovered Rostovtsev's letter. Ten minutes elapsed and the young lieutenant still waited. Then the door of the adjoining room suddenly opened and Nicholas Pavlovitsh called him in, locked the door carefully after him, and taking the young man by the hand, kissed him several times. "That is your reward," he said. Then Nicholas asked the lieutenant if a conspiracy really did exist against him, and if he personally knew any of the conspirators. Rostovtsev refused to betray any names, and Nicholas then said that he would not ask him to do such a thing. With regard to the Crown he declared that neither the pleadings of his mother nor friends could persuade Constantine to alter his decision, and that therefore, in the interests of Russia, he himself was compelled to accept the Imperial Crown. "Russia cannot be without a Tsar," he said.[2]

His conversation with Rostovtsev and Diebitsh's report made a profound impression upon Nicholas. New letters had in the meantime arrived

[1] *Russian Archives, ibid.* See also Shilder, *Emperor Nicholas I, St. Petersburg*, 1903, i, p. 259.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 260.



DEATH OF ALEXANDER I.

from his brother which still neither definitely declared his abdication nor his willingness to accept the Crown; therefore Nicholas decided to take a decisive step. This was December 12th; he wrote to Diebitsh: "The day after to-morrow I shall either be Tsar—or dead." On December 12th, also, Speransky prepared a manifesto announcing the ascension of Nicholas to the Russian throne, and on the 13th, the next day, Nicholas signed the manifesto and settled on the 14th as the day for taking the oath of allegiance. He instructed General Voinov to convene all the generals of the corps de garde on the morrow at the Winter Palace, where he intended personally to announce the abdication of his brother, so as to avoid any pretext for trouble. He then summoned Count Nesselrode and informed him that the interregnum was at an end.[1]

But the inhabitants of the capital were not without misgivings; there was something in the air. People meeting in the streets greeted each other with: "What about to-morrow?" There was something indefinite and ominous in the political situation, and many guessed, apart from those who knew, that the 14th would not pass without some trouble at least. The members of the Northern League were busy; they had convened several meetings and had decided to avail themselves of the day fixed for the taking of the oath of allegiance to realise some of the aims of the society.

The death of Alexander had found the League quite unprepared. Therefore, being unable themselves to initiate any revolution, the members of

[1] Shilder, *l.c.*, p. 263.

the Northern League had decided to hold themselves ready to help the Southerners—these could arrange an insurrection. Then suddenly the news of Constantine's abdication entirely changed the aspect of affairs. The authorities knew that it would be very difficult to make the soldiers and people understand that Constantine really had abdicated, and both society and the guards were definitely hostile to Nicholas. Jakubovitsh told Miloradovitsh that he would not take the oath of allegiance to any one until Constantine came to the capital and publicly declared his intention. As a matter of fact, it was commonly said that Nicholas was secretly urging Constantine to abdicate, and—they disliked him.

Jakubovitsh was not the only one to refuse to take the oath of allegiance. The people felt so sure of a reign of tyranny under Nicholas that they even regretted the reactionary period under Alexander. To a certain extent, as the rumours of Constantine's abdication grew stronger, so the attitude of the members of the Northern League changed. "Now or never," said Ryleev; and it was decided to act at once. But how they were to act and what steps they should take if Constantine really did abdicate and Nicholas ascend the throne, they did not quite know. The house of Ryleev became the principal meeting place; there they discussed, debated, declaimed passionately, but no one really knew the extent either of the society's resources or power.

"The plans and measures to be taken for the insurrection," writes Baron Rosen, one of the conspirators, "were indefinite and indefinable; in reply to my observations Prince Obolenski and

Boulatov replied mockingly: "But you cannot have a dress rehearsal of the insurrection." [1]

All were enthusiastic, all were ready to act and *nearly* all were sure of success. "Ryleev alone," writes Baron Rosen, "was doubtful of success, but," he added, "we must begin; the beginning and the example will be useful to others!" "I feel sure that we shall fail," said Ryleev, "but the insurrection is necessary. The tactics of a revolutionary consist of two words: Cause trouble; therefore, even if we fail, our very failure will be a lesson to others."

For some time the members debated whether their insurrection against Nicholas should be conducted on the lines of the palace revolutions which had taken place in Russia during the preceding century—under cover of the night—or in open, broad daylight. It was finally decided to adopt the new method, one hitherto unknown in Russian history: rebellion in public, in the presence of the people; on their sympathy, at least, they felt sure they could rely. Prince Troubetskoy, Colonel of the Preobrazhenski regiment, was elected leader of the revolution. They understood that several regiments were ready to refuse to take the oath of allegiance to Nicholas. It was also agreed that if Constantine came to St. Petersburg, the rebellion would be put aside for the present, but otherwise they were to insist upon a constitution.

Yet all these ideas were vague, and no definite plan of action could be arrived at. They were all dreamers and theoreticians; Ryleev was a poet, and the League badly lacked a resolute and

[1] *Rosen, Zapiski*, Leipzig, 1870, p. 86.

strategic leader, prepared to meet any emergency. They did not even know certainly how many regiments would act with them and refuse to take the oath of allegiance, or how many men would be on their side. In a word, the coming day was a riddle to all those who had decided to play a prominent and historic part in it.

Their last meeting took place on the eve of the 14th at Ryleev's house.

Among Troubetskoy's papers there was found, later, a plan of a manifesto which, in case of their success, was to have been promulgated by the Senate. It contained the following: (1) Abolition of the former Government. (2) The establishment of a Provisional Government until a Constituent Assembly, elected by the people, should decide upon a new form of government. (3) The freedom of the press and the abolition of the censorship. (4) Freedom of conscience and equality of all creeds. (5) The abolition of serfdom. (6) The equality of all classes of society before the law and the abolition of courts-martial as well as of all kinds of legal commissions. All the pending actions to be transferred to the civil tribunals. (7) The right of every subject to exercise any profession he chose without hindrance and consideration of class. (8) The abolition of taxes according to souls. (9) The abolition of all monopolies. (10) The abolition of military colonies and the prevailing mode of recruiting soldiers to be abolished. (11) Diminution of the term of military service for the soldiers. A definite term of military service was to be fixed and obligatory service introduced for all classes of society. (12) The liberation of all soldiers who had been in the

army for fifteen years. (13) The introduction of communal, district, government and provincial administrations. (14) Publicity in judicial affairs. (15) The introduction of juries in criminal and civil cases.

CHAPTER V

DECEMBER THE 14TH

DECEMBER the 14th, that fatal day, at last arrived. Nicholas rose early and said to his Adjutant-General Benkendorff: "To-night we shall perhaps be in another world, but at least we shall have died in the accomplishment of our duty." Arrayed in the uniform of the Ismailov regiment, the new Tsar entered the room where all the generals and colonels commanding the guard corps were assembled, and verbally explained to them that since his brother Constantine, the rightful heir, had abdicated, he, Nicholas, as the next in line and the heir-apparent, was compelled to accept the crown and take upon his shoulders "the burden of Tsardom." He then read to the assembled officers the manifesto of Alexander I and the instructions of the late Emperor. All present then declared themselves satisfied, and that everything was quite legal and in perfect order. Nicholas then solemnly declared: "After this, you are responsible for the peace of the capital; your heads depend upon it. As for myself, even if I am Tsar but for one hour, I shall show myself worthy of the Crown."

It is evident that Nicholas knew more of the workings of the Secret Society than Rostovtsev had

told him. He had decided to act firmly and to frustrate all possible plans of the conspirators. The generals and colonels were dismissed with instructions to make the army take the oath of allegiance to the new ruler, but the regiments were to be sworn in separately, and in turn.

Whilst Nicholas and his Government were thus taking active steps to force the army and the greater institutions to take the oath of allegiance, a number of the conspirators were preparing for insurrection. Some of the revolutionaries had passed a sleepless night. To-morrow the great question, "To be or not to be," was to be answered. They held a short meeting at seven o'clock in the morning and then dispersed. Some hesitated, and suggested postponing the insurrection to another, and better opportunity, but others strenuously opposed this, especially the brothers Bestyoushev and Shtshepkin-Rostovski. They were the first to give the signal of insurrection. Bestyoushev, who commanded a battalion, addressed his men and told them that Constantine had been detained on his way to the capital, and that steps were being taken to make the guards recognise Nicholas, who had no right to the throne, as Tsar. The men then shouted: "We don't want Nicholas. Hurrah for Constantine!" Bestyoushev continued his work among the other companies, and soon the entire regiment was ripe for rebellion.

The Generals Shenshin and Frederics, as well as Colonel Khvoshtshinski, made an effort to calm the soldiers, but the enraged Shtshepkin-Rostovski felled the first two; the colonel managed to escape. The regiment was then led by the two agitators, who were soon joined by Jakubovitsh, towards

the Senatorial Square. The square was empty. Bestyoushev and Shtshepkin drew their men up in a line and waited. Ryleev had come to the square shortly after seven in the morning, and finding it empty had started to go to the Ismailov regiment; but on the way he had met another conspirator, who informed him that his efforts in that direction would be useless; thereupon Ryleev had returned to the square, but soon after disappeared and was not seen again that day. A little later Prince Obolenski and his chasseurs arrived.

Suddenly, Miloradovitsh, the Governor-General of the capital, galloped up on horseback; he addressed the soldiers, calling upon them to take the oath of allegiance to Nicholas. He told them that he, too, had been in favour of Constantine, but that the latter had abdicated; and he asked them to believe that he himself had read the act of abdication. Obolenski saw what a dangerous effect such a speech might have, and demanded that the Count should retire, but Miloradovitsh paid no attention to him, whereupon Obolenski drew his sword and attacked the Count, wounding him slightly. At that moment Kakhovski fired his pistol at the Count, who died very shortly afterwards from the effects of the shot. It was Prince Golitsyn who took the news of Miloradovitsh's fate to Nicholas.

The square now resounded with shouts of "Long live Constantine!" But the Tsar had by now been informed that some of the regiments had taken the oath of allegiance to him; the first to come to his aid was the Horse Guards, commanded by General Orlov. These at once proceeded to the square and attacked the rebellious troops, but

the attack failed, since the men of the Horse Guards fired unwillingly on their comrades; therefore Orlov drew his regiment up to face the rebels, but remained passive. The square gradually filled up with new regiments, some of whom joined the rebels.

Then, suddenly, the Emperor appeared, surrounded by a battalion of the Preobrazhenski guards, but he did not dare to come within reach of the rebellious troops; he knew that if he did he would meet the same fate as Miloradovitsh. Kakhovski said afterwards that he had been ready to shoot the Tsar also. For a moment the position was critical for Nicholas. Seven companies of the Grenadier Regiment, under the leadership of Panov, went to the Winter Palace with the intention of taking forcible possession of it, and, in case of serious opposition, of assassinating the entire Imperial family. The dynasty which was to rule over Russia for nearly another century was saved by a sapper regiment faithful to the Tsar; they arrived but a few moments before the revolutionaries and took up their position in front of the palace. "Had this sapper regiment," writes Nicholas in his Reminiscences, "arrived but a few minutes later, the Palace would have been occupied by the revolutionaries and the Imperial family would have been at the mercy of the rebels." [1]

In the meantime, faithful troops were being despatched to the square, and the mutineers were gradually surrounded by various detachments and regiments who had hastened to take the oath of allegiance. However, even then the insurrection

[1] Schilder, *l.c.*, p. 287.

would have succeeded had the insurgents but taken some initiative. The faithful regiments arrived but very slowly, and not a few were more than half willing to join the insurgents if the latter had but made some decisive move. The crowd, too, which by now filled the square, was very evidently in sympathy with the insurgents. Three regiments supposedly faithful to Nicholas, the Semionovski, Pavlovski and Preobrazhenski, sent word to the insurgents that if a signal for initiative were given they would join them, but unfortunately the insurgents remained inactive. They stood there motionless, not knowing what they were there for or what they were going to do. They had no one to lead them or to give instructions.

Troubetskoy, who had been appointed chief and leader of the Revolution, was invisible. He wandered over the town, avoiding the square where the whole city turbulently awaited the *dénouement* of the great drama. He, the supposed leader, was absent at the crucial moment; he did not believe in the success of their effort, and, unfortunately, his pessimism made him commit an act of treachery towards his fellow conspirators. Schilder relates that later, when Troubetskoy was a prisoner in the fortress of Peter and Paul, Adjutant Levashev found an opportunity of accusing him of having done a great deal of harm to Russia with his badly planned insurrection. "Ah, mon Prince, vous avez fait bien du mal à la Russie; vous l'avez reculée de cinquante ans." What Schilder means of course, is that the very idea of getting up an insurrection that was bound to be a failure naturally resulted in throwing Nicholas into the arms of reaction. But, I venture to think, that if

Troubetskoy was guilty it was not because of his participation in the secret conspiracy, but because of his treacherous and cowardly behaviour at the last moment—the decisive moment.

Another member of the Secret Society who was a true traitor was General Shipov, an intimate friend of Colonel Pestel. He not only betrayed his comrades at the critical moment and went over to the Tsar, but he also did his best to persuade the other officers of his brigade to take the oath of allegiance to Nicholas. Jakubovitsh, too, who had so frequently declared his intention of shooting the Tsar, declared he had a headache, and disappeared. He had several opportunities of firing his loaded pistol at the Tsar as he had so often threatened to do, but he lacked the courage. Thus the rebels in the square had no leader with the necessary courage and authority to dispose of the armed force at his disposal. There the poor mutineers stood, shouting continuously: "Hurrah, Constantine!"

At length the old Metropolitan, Seraphim, approached the mutineers and made an effort to bring them to reason. "Warriors!" he cried, "calm yourselves. You are acting against God, the Church and the country. Constantine Pavlovitsh has formally abdicated and renounced his right to the Russian Crown and has himself taken the oath of allegiance to his brother Nicholas, who thus legally ascends the throne. The Senate, the Synod and the people have followed his example. You alone have dared to rebel. God is my witness that I am telling you the truth and, as head of the Holy Church, I implore you to swear fealty to our Tsar."

But the insurgents replied: "It is not true. Where is Constantine?"

"In Warsaw," replied the prelate.

"No," insisted the insurgents, "he is not in Warsaw; he is a prisoner in chains; bring him hither. Hurrah, Constantine! What sort of Metropolitan are you to have taken your oath of allegiance to two Emperors in the course of a single fortnight? You are a traitor, a deserter, that's what you are. Go to your Church and send us Michael Pavlovitsh; we wish to speak to him."

Michael Pavlovitsh, accompanied by General Voinov, approached the mutineers, but Kuechelbecker pointed his pistol at the prince and fired at the general. After these repeated failures to bring the insurgents to reason, General Vassiltshikov turned to Nicholas and said: "Sire, il n'y a pas un moment à perdre, on n'y peut rien maintenant; il faut de la mitraille." Nicholas pretended to feel horrified at the very idea of such a step, though he admitted its necessity. I frankly confess that to me, judged in the light of his behaviour to his subjects during his reign, his assertion was rank hypocrisy. "Vous voulez que je verse le sang de mes sujets le premier jour de mon règne," he retorted, to which Vassiltshikov replied: "Pour sauver votre empire." [1]

The Tsar then sent General Soukhozanet with an ultimatum. The general called upon the revolutionaries to lay down their arms or the mitrailleuse would spit fire. "Go back," they cried in reply, "and send some one more honest." Soukhozanet informed the Tsar that the rebels had

[1] Schilder, p. 290.

refused to obey, and the signal for the first salvo was given. Sure now that he had sufficient armed forces on his side, the ruler of Russia, the "little father," gave the brief command to fire upon his children: "For God and the Tsar, forward."

The first cannon-shot hit the edifice of the Senate and killed several people sitting on the roof. The insurgents replied with the cry: "Hurrah, Constantine!" and attempted to attack the artillery with their bayonets, but the salvos now followed in quick succession. It was murderous; blood flowed in abundance! Nicholas had begun to rule over Russia! Not only many of the mutineers who had foregathered and vaguely clamoured for a constitution, a representative government, abolition of serfdom and other luxuries, but also thousands of the populace, innocent victims who had no knowledge of the demands of the Decembrists, with their dead bodies paved the way to the throne for Nicholas Romanov. The snow on the Isaac Square was crimson, and the blood of the victims cried to Heaven for vengeance; but it was nearly a century before Heaven answered that cry, and thousands upon thousands were still to suffer under the yoke of autocracy before its doom would be sealed.

The insurgents could do nothing against the murderous fire of the mitrailleuses, and they fled in confusion out on the ice-bound Neva. Bestyoushev made an effort to organise the remaining men for an attack upon the fortress of Peter and Paul, but the mitrailleuses again spat fire upon them. Still the rebels tried to reorganise themselves for a definite attack, when suddenly the cry arose: "We are drowning!" The cannon had

burst the ice and the unhappy fugitives were drowned in the river. Thus Tsar Nicholas punished the men who had dared to dream of liberty; those who had escaped the fire of his cannon found an early grave in the waters of the Neva. Autocracy gained the day. It had made itself felt, and had proclaimed its power both by fire and sword; the hope of opposition was entirely crushed.

But the work of destruction continued, although peace had been established! How many victims had been sacrificed to save the throne for a scion of the house of Romanov could never be ascertained. They were not only military men, but included also thousands of the civil population. When the first salvo was fired, a panic naturally arose among the lookers-on, and they rushed towards the houses; but as all the gates in the square were closed, and remained closed despite the entreaties of the frightened people, many were crushed to death. Nicholas ordered that the victims should be removed late at night, for autocracy always hates to see the blood which is shed in its service and for its benefit.

The dead were removed in a most inhuman manner. Holes were cut in the ice-bound Neva, and the victims, many of whom were still alive though grievously wounded and unable to escape, were thrown in. And many of those who did escape were afraid to go to a doctor to have their wounds dressed, and so died of their effects. During that winter it was not at all unusual for the workmen who were busy cutting blocks of ice from the Neva to come across a frozen arm or a leg, or even a whole body. With the approach of spring the ice melted and the bodies of the

Decembrists, the pioneers of Russian freedom, were carried by the Neva to the Baltic Sea,[1] where, a century later, they were to be joined by the victims of the submarines of another autocrat —a German this time. And yet there are still men, even in our age, who have the heart to cry: "Vive l'Empereur!"

The official reports naturally minimise the number of victims and pretend that only about seventy or eighty people lost their lives in the Isaac Square. This ridiculous statement is flatly denied by several of the Decembrists, notably Bestyoushev and Stengel, in their Memoirs.

About a fortnight after these events the members of the Southern League made an attempt to organise a revolution, but they were at once suppressed. Some of the leaders then committed suicide, while others were arrested and sent to the capital. Then the Tsar began the work of revenge. During the night of December 14th–15th, Nicholas busied himself questioning the first captive members of the Secret Society. He had firmly made up his mind to show no mercy to his powerless foes. Prisoners were brought to him from all parts of the country, a new batch every day; the Tsar seemed to derive great pleasure from superintending the whole procedure; he was at once public prosecutor, examining magistrate, judge and jury. He was quite in his element.

Nicholas was a born detective and spy; he was suspicious by nature and always on the look out for some criminal whom he could hand over to the authorities or the police. These characteristics manifested themselves at their height, being given

[1] Schilder, *l.c.*, p. 516. Note 328.

ample opportunity and scope, during the first few months of his reign. In those days Russia had no Tsar, no ruler. Her Tsar was not a ruler but a detective, an examining magistrate and a gaoler. He delighted in torturing the accused with his questions and making them confess to crimes they had never committed and intentions they had never dreamed of. It may be said that in this art of compelling the criminal to confess, this Imperial Grand Inquisitor surpassed all his salaried officials.[1] Practically all the prisoners were brought to the Imperial Palace, where they were either questioned personally by the Tsar himself or, occasionally, by his adjutant, when the Emperor would remain in an adjoining room where he could hear every word spoken.

It must be admitted that Nicholas showed not only energy and liking for this detective work, but also a considerable amount of psychological insight. He endeavoured to form a clear idea of the character, the personality and the weakness of each prisoner, and then employed tactics to suit them. Sometimes he posed as the benevolent ruler anxious to know the requirements of the Empire and ready to grant reforms; sometimes he made these dreamers believe that he was a martyr and not to be envied. He often went so far as to kiss the accused and call them his friends, while he urged them to tell him everything, the whole truth, and so help him to make Russia happy. He knew how to assume such an air of absolute sincerity that some of those unfortunate dreamers believed him. Knaves always find dreamers and enthusiasts easy prey, which explains why it is so

[1] Cf. Pokrovski, *History of Russia*, vol. i, p. 130.



TSAR NICHOLAS I.



VERA FIGNEY.

often the hypocrite who becomes the leader of great idealistic movements, thus ruining them and driving the honest people away. History gives us many examples of this.

What the Tsar desired to know, of course, was merely the strength of the movement and its possible danger to himself and his dynasty. He desired to come out victorious in this struggle of autocracy with incipient revolution; to crush it in the bud; to tear it out root and branch from Russian soil and the Russian soul. Any means that would enable him to do this were agreeable to him. His Imperial dignity, which later he held so proudly, did not for the moment deter him from stooping to the pettiest, most contemptible, and hypocritical methods to obtain what he wished. He cajoled, flattered, threatened, insulted, kissed, boxed the ears, whined and complained in turn according to the psychology of the prisoner he had before him. Many of the conspirators fell into the snare. Some hoped that a complete confession of their aims would convince the Tsar of the necessity for reforms, whilst others trusted in his clemency; others again were just frightened. Ryleev, Kakhovski, Troubetskoy, Pestel and several others made a complete confession.

Some of the conspirators had families dependent upon them, so Nicholas took charge of these at once. *Noblesse oblige!* Many of the revolutionaries actually believed that revenge had no place in the noble Imperial heart of Nicholas Romanov. He only wished to know what Russia required, and therefore, what better service could they render their beloved country than to acquaint the man

presiding over her destinies with her needs, her wants, her sufferings and her aspirations? They laid bare their hearts, they confessed their sins, hoping for absolution and consolation. Nicholas had sent 2,000 roubles to Ryleev's wife and children, and the tender and loving husband and father thrilled with gratitude towards the Imperial benefactor. From his prison cell Ryleev wrote to his wife and advised her to pray for the Emperor and the entire Romanov family. "As for myself," added this whilom conspirator, "whatever happens I shall live and die for my Tsar and my country."

Some of the accused were more clear-sighted, and obstinately refused to betray the secrets of their society. Such were Lunin and Yakushkin. Troubetskoy's behaviour on the fatal day was well known to Nicholas; he knew that the self-appointed dictator had been in hiding the whole day, afraid to meet his fellow conspirators. He therefore adopted a manner calculated to frighten the prince as well as to wound his pride. Pointing at his prisoner's head, the Tsar exclaimed: "What folly lodged itself in this head that *you*, with your name and family, could have got mixed up in such an affair! You, a Colonel of the Guards, a Prince! Are you not ashamed to be found among such rabble? Ah, but your fate shall be a terrible one!" Troubetskoy fell on his knees and begged for mercy, and then said whatever the Tsar wanted him to say.

This Imperial actor must really have possessed talent that would be the envy of many a star of the stage! To the impressionable and naïve prisoner he appeared, not the despot and tyrant,

but the most benevolent of monarchs and the most humane of men. They sang his praises in their letters to their families.

Of the two obstinate prisoners, Lunin and Yakushkin, the latter's version of the investigation is exceedingly interesting. He was not arrested until January 10th. He had been expecting arrest, so was not surprised when the superintendent of police suddenly appeared and took him to the Winter Palace. That first night he passed in a room on the ground floor of the Palace, with soldiers carrying drawn swords on guard at the door and window. Towards the evening of the next day he was taken to another department and interviewed by General Levashev. The prisoner was invited to sit down, and asked whether he belonged to the Secret Society, to which Yakushkin answered in the affirmative.

"And what do you know of the activity of the Secret Society?" queried Levashev.

Yakushkin shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know anything at all about the Secret Society," was his curt reply.

Levashev smiled ironically. "My dear sir," he said, "do you imagine we are so ignorant as all that? The events of December 14th were premature, no doubt, but in 1818 it had also been your intention to organise a revolution against the late Tsar. I can even give the details of that intended insurrection. Lots were drawn by all those who were present at that secret gathering to determine who should kill the Tsar—and you drew the winning piece."

"That is not quite correct, your Excellency," replied Yakushkin; "I offered myself voluntarily,

and categorically refused to allow any of my companions to participate in the honour."

Levashev wrote down Yakushkin's confession. "Will you now very kindly," he continued, "give me the names of all the gentlemen who were present at that secret gathering?"

"That is quite impossible, your Excellency," replied the prisoner. "When I became a member of the Secret Society I gave my word of honour never to betray my friends."

"Then we shall have to compel you to speak," replied the General. "It is my painful duty, my dear sir, to remind you that torture is still in existence in Russia." [1]

"I am, of course, greatly obliged to you, Excellency, for the warning, but I confess that I now feel it more than ever my duty not to speak and betray my friends."

Levashev tried a different policy. "Look here," he said, "I am not speaking to you as your judge but as your equal, and I fail to understand your loyalty to people who have not hesitated to betray you."

"I am not here to judge of the conduct of my companions," coolly replied Yakushkin. "I only know that in spite of everything, it is my duty to keep the promise I gave, even if others may have forgotten it."

"But all your friends have admitted that the aim of the Secret Society was to establish a new government in place of autocracy."

"That is quite possible," was the reply.

[1] Torture was abolished by Nicholas in 1827, but criminals were nevertheless tortured in Moscow in 1834 and at Kostroma in 1847.

"Then what do you know about the constitution with which the country was to have been endowed?"

"I know absolutely nothing about it."

Yakushkin maintains in his Memoirs that he did really know very little of the programme of the constitution elaborated by Nikita Mouraviev.

"Then wherein did your activity as a member of the Secret Society lie?"

"I was endeavouring to find means and ways to abolish serfdom in Russia," was Yakushkin's reply. "That is a knot that the Government should either disentangle or cut, and that very quickly, or the consequences will be disastrous."

"But what do you expect the Government to do?" cried Levashev in surprise.

"The Government," replied the prisoner, "could buy the freedom of the serfs from the landowners and proprietors."

"But that is quite impossible," replied the General. "You know perfectly well that the Government is short of money."

Once more Levashev endeavoured to persuade the prisoner to betray his fellow conspirators but Yakushkin remained firm. He was then requested to sign the sheet of paper upon which the general had written the confessions, admissions and remarks made by his victim. Yakushkin signed without reading it. He was then ordered to retire into an adjoining room, and here the phantom of what torture might mean came to him, and his heart fell, but, nevertheless, he decided to remain firm and follow the path he considered honour dictated to him. Ten minutes passed; then the door opened and he was called in once more. This

time Levashev was not alone; the new Emperor stood by the writing table.

"You have broken your oath," thundered Nicholas.

"I am guilty, your Imperial Highness!"

"What do you expect in the next world? Have you thought of that? Damnation! You may despise the opinion of your fellow men, but the idea of what is in store for you in the next world should fill your heart with terror. However," continued the autocrat, "I shall not let you perish entirely; I shall send a clergyman to you. Well, have you nothing to say?"

"What is it that your Imperial Highness wishes me to say?"

"I think that I have spoken quite clearly and distinctly. If you are anxious not to ruin your family, if you do not wish to be treated like a pig, then I advise you to confess everything."

"I am sorry," was Yakushkin's firm reply, "but I gave my word of honour not to betray any one. As for myself, I have told everything concerning my work to his Excellency here."

"Go to the devil with your abominable word of honour and his Excellency," was Nicholas's vehement reply.

"I cannot betray my friends, your Imperial Highness."

The new Tsar was furious. Pointing to the obstinate prisoner, he commanded: "Put him in chains, so that he will not be able to move."

Yakushkin confesses that he at first had been a little afraid that the Tsar would adopt a different course with him: would work upon his weakness and his sentimental nature, would play the

generous and magnanimous ruler, and thus get the better of him. But Nicholas had decided to act otherwise, which seems to show that he was not the fine psychologist and detective that he prided himself on being. His method failed in this case; throughout the conversation the prisoner remained calm, for he felt himself the stronger of the two. Then Yakushkin was led away. Once more the fear of torture took hold of him; he felt sure that by "chains" the Tsar had intimated some form of torture, only it was not decent for Majesty to soil its lips with such an ugly word.

The prisoner was put in chains and then marched to the Alexis Ravelin. Passing over the drawbridge he remembered Dante's lines: "Leave every hope behind you, all ye who enter here!" He was placed in a tiny cell, but six feet long and four wide. It was furnished with a bedstead, on which were an old mattress and a woollen bedcloth such as are used in hospitals, two chairs, a nightlamp and a small table upon which stood a jug of water. "When the key was turned in the door and I was left alone," writes Yakushkin, "I was quite happy; torture had passed me by and I had time to collect my thoughts again."

Another obstinate prisoner was Colonel Lunin, famed for his great intelligence and energy. He was accused of regicidal intentions. "Gentlemen," he replied, "our Secret Society never contemplated regicide; its aims and purpose were much nobler. Yet as you yourself know full well, the idea of regicide is not new to Russia; we have had quite recent examples of this." Lunin was referring to the assassination of Paul I. Since two members of the court of inquiry before which Lunin had

been brought had been mixed up in that assassination, his reply greatly disconcerted his would-be judges; these two members were Tatitshev and Koutousov.

Many attempts were made to force Nikita Mouraviev to confess that the Secret Society had aimed at founding a Republic in Russia. "Gentlemen," replied Mouraviev at last, tired of their insistence, "the plan for a constitution which I elaborated, and which is now before you, is monarchical; but since my arrest I have had time to think, therefore I now frankly declare to you that I have become a convinced Republican." [1]

After his own preliminary work, the Tsar handed the matter over to a Commission. This consisted of the Minister of War, who was the President; Grand Duke Michael, who was thus both judge and prosecutor; General Diebitsh, a Prussian who "like many other foreign adventurers enjoyed the Imperial favour"; [2] General Koutousov, the Governor-General of St. Petersburg; Prince Golitsyn; the Generals Potapov, Levashev and Tshernitshev. Colonel Adlerburg, aide-de-camp to the Tsar, was also present to take notes which were passed on to his Imperial master. This tribunal met at the house of the commandant of the fortress of the capital, and when orders were given to hasten the conclusion of the inquiry, the sittings were held during the night as well as the day. It was Nicholas's aim not only to judge and punish a few criminals, but also "to penetrate into the innermost recesses of the conspiracy, to

[1] Cf. Th. Schiemann, *Die Ermordung Pauls*, 1902, Berlin, p. 175.

[2] Mouraviev's notes, Schiemann, *l.c.*, p. 173.

discover its origin, to follow it up in all its ramifications, to gauge its progress and extent, and to establish the results of the inquiry, not upon circumstantial evidence and probabilities, but upon certain undeniable facts and irrefutable evidence and proofs."

Such were the instructions given by the Tsar to the Commission. The Commission finally finished its work, and Nicholas was satisfied; he had conquered a powerful enemy, the more powerful that he had worked in the heart of the Empire and not abroad.

The manner in which the Tsar announced his victory to his beloved subjects is worthy of special notice. "When, thanks to the impenetrable designs of the Almighty, a conspiracy was revealed unto us in the first few days of our reign, a conspiracy that had already been in existence for over ten years and was working in the dark against us, we at once recognised the manifestation of the Divine will invisibly pointing out to us our duty and our present conduct. We understood the sanctity of our obligations, especially in view of the fact that the conspiracy was not only a danger to ourselves but to the whole of Russia." Thus the Tsar was not punishing criminals, and it was, of course, out of the question for the autocrat to seek revenge; he was simply safeguarding Russia; he was saving the revolutionaries from themselves by removing them from temptation.

The devil is not the only one who can quote Scripture in his defence. History can give us many instances of the most heinous crimes being explained by the most noble and unselfish of motives. Has there ever been a crime committed

by an individual, or by a collectivity in power, that was not labelled by that individual, or that collectivity, an act of justice or a deed of nobility? Thus the Tsar surrounded his so-called trials with a halo of justice, although the Court received his instructions, in advance, how to treat each particular prisoner. Elizabeth Petrovna, the daughter of Peter the Great, had abolished capital punishment for ordinary criminals, but not for political prisoners. It would, however, be unwise to imagine that the Tsaritza, in abolishing capital punishment for assassins and brigands, had been actuated by any feeling of pity or special clemency towards her subjects.

A close study of this history of the Romanovs has convinced us that Alexander II is the *only* Romanov who ever exhibited the slightest degree of generosity towards his people. Nicholas I certainly never manifested any, and the measure abolishing the death penalty in the case of ordinary criminals promulgated by Elizabeth Petrovna was dictated by more selfish considerations than a mere dislike to shedding human blood. There were mines that had to be worked and exploited, and for which voluntary labour was difficult to obtain; therefore, forced labour had to be found, so the gallows and the ravens were deprived of their victims. There were also vast tracts of land which did not attract the colonist, and criminals were exiled to those inhospitable regions. The mines were Russia's dry guillotine; they had a double advantage in the eyes of autocracy: they not only swallowed the Tsar's political enemies and rendered them harmless, but they also yielded a handsome profit to the State.

Of course the judgments of the Court were very severe on the Decembrists. The Tsar had wished that the punishment should be severe, so as to give him an opportunity to exercise his Imperial clemency. He had two reasons for this: he wished to impress the masses of his subjects with the nobility of his sentiments on the one hand, and, on the other, he was fully aware that the eyes of Europe were upon him.

Yet Nicholas was anxious not only to have his revenge, but also to impress upon all embryo revolutionaries the utter foolishness and futility of making another effort. He decided to make an example with a few of the leaders and to arrange the rest into separate groups. Five were, therefore, placed so to speak *hors concours*: they were condemned to death—that is, to be quartered. These five were Colonel Pestel, Sub-Colonel Sergius Mouraviev-Apostol, and the three officers, Peter Kakhovsky, Michael Bestyoushev-Ryoumin and Kondraty Ryleev. Of the remaining 116, thirty-one were to be hanged, seventeen were condemned to perpetual servitude in the mines, and the other eighty-five to various terms of penal servitude and exile. The sentences were then graciously commuted by the sovereign. The thirty-one condemned to be hanged had their sentence commuted into penal servitude, while the sentences of the remaining eighty-five were all reduced. As regards the five placed *hors concours*, the Tsar permitted the death penalty, but informed the Court that he wished the men punished in such a way as to avoid the "shedding of blood"! The Court literally followed the gracious instructions of his Majesty: the five were hanged! The sentence

was executed upon them on the night of July 12th–13th.

"Night is propitious for crime," writes Alexander Mouraviev, the brother of Nikita Mouraviev, in a letter addressed to his wife. "We were led out into an open space in front of the fortress and there we saw the gallows. Those of us who were in uniform had it stripped off; the uniforms were then thrown into the fire, our swords were broken over our heads; we were degraded, we were outlaws to be shunned by man and cursed by God. Whilst we were being led back to our cells, our five companions were being seized and led to the gallows. Two of our unfortunate and noble companions, Ryleev and Sergius Mouraviev-Apostol, were thrown down from the top of the gallows; the fall broke their limbs; they were then hanged, mutilated as they were." [1]

But no blood had been shed, and the instructions of the Tsar had been carried out to the letter. The victims paid the penalty for a crime which humanity at large, Governments in power but, above all, autocrats, can never pardon: the crime of harbouring new and revolutionary ideas—subversive and progressive ideas that attack and criticise the order of things as they are, ideas that are the true birthright of man and that emanate from his innate craving for independence and freedom. But, alas! to think differently from those in power, be it in the domain of religion, politics or sociology, does not suit those who have usurped and cling to power. Criticism of authority, sincere thought on justice and injustice may lead to action, may cause the masses to realise

[1] Schiemann, *l.c.*, p. 177.

for whose benefit the authorities, in all ages and in all countries, think and labour. The masses might even take it into their stupid heads to shake off the shackles of thraldom and hurl the usurpers of power and authority from their pedestals. And therefore the pioneers of new ideas have always been persecuted, exiled, imprisoned, thrown into lions' dens, led to scaffolds and crucified.

Yet justice is always at hand, and history generally revenges itself. That which one generation condemns as blasphemous or hateful, the next will uphold and adore. To the memory of those whom one generation put to death, the next will erect statues and altars, and pious pilgrims will flock to their flower-strewn shrines. The despised and persecuted revolutionaries of one age become the prophets of the next. What would Nicholas I think of the Russia of to-day?

The pioneers of Russian freedom were buried secretly on one of the islands of the Neva, and swift messengers were sent to Tsarkoe Selo to tell the Tsar that, at last, he was revenged upon his enemies and could sleep in peace.

Whilst the judges and other servile servants of autocracy were rewarded with titles and gifts for their obedience, there were some who swore revenge. One poor lieutenant, a soldier's son, was ordered to lead the five political criminals to the gallows, but he refused. "I have served with honour," he replied, pointing to the cross of St. George pinned upon his breast, "and now in my old age I refuse to become the hangman of five men whom I sincerely respect." Again, Colonel Zoubov of the Cavalier Guards bluntly refused to

lead his regiment to the scene of the execution. "They are my comrades," he said, "and I shall not go." [1] Thus there were some who dared to be themselves even at the moment when all trembled before the new ruler.

The first batch of prisoners were sent to the mines on July 18th; they were put in chains and marched off to their distant destination. Though the Tsar was anxious to cut these individuals out of the communal life, to eradicate their very memory, yet he did not succeed. Several of the wives of the condemned followed them into exile, and thus a link was forged between the socially and politically dead and Russian society. Some of the condemned had the terms of their servitude reduced several times—whenever, indeed, the Tsar thought it necessary to show himself the benevolent ruler. But even then they were relegated to the most distant corners of Siberia, and not permitted to communicate with each other.

In 1856, Alexander II, when he ascended the throne, permitted the few remaining Decembrists to return to civilisation and to live where they chose, except in either of the two capitals, Moscow or St. Petersburg. Twenty-nine availed themselves of his clemency; the rest had either died long before or been allowed to leave Siberia. These twenty-nine were reinstated in their social positions, but Alexander's generosity did not go so far as to return to them their property which his august father had confiscated.

Before leaving the history of the Decembrists, the pioneers of the Russian Revolution and Russian struggle for freedom, it may be as well to examine

[1] Schiemann, *l.c.*, p. 177.

their ideas and aspirations. The Decembrists were revolutionary patriots. Their patriotism was based upon their love for Russia and an ardent desire to see their country independent of other nations, externally and internally. Their love for Russia's past, for those moments in her history that marked the self-assertion of the national character, made them yearn for a revival of the popular assemblies in Red Russia and for the power and independence of old Novgorod. Though the Decembrists aimed at introducing reforms and institutions similar to those then prevailing in Western Europe, yet these were not to be mere slavish imitations; they were to be adapted to suit Russian peculiarities.

Unlike the Slavophiles, the Decembrists did not believe in Russia's special mission, but they had great faith in the moral and physical qualities of the nation. Some of them were in favour of a constitutional monarchy, whilst others were Republicans pure and simple. The majority were opposed to socialism as it then existed; in religion they were convinced deists. They all recognised the necessity of a revolution, it being the only means of introducing any new political or social institutions into Russia. It must be borne in mind that this revolutionary group was not composed of proletarians and working men, but of officers belonging to the highest nobility, all of them very rich and the owners of vast tracts of land and thousands of serfs.

The majority of the Decembrists, therefore, thought of a political, not of a social and economic revolution. It was but natural that Colonel Pestel's proposition to dispossess the seigneurs

and hand over the land to the peasants, found but little encouragement among this revolutionary group of aristocrats. But Pestel, inspired by Babeuf, St. Simon and Fourier, was neither a dreamer nor a Utopian; he was simply a socialist before socialism had been crystallised into a doctrine. He had grasped the true reality of things and was well acquainted with the spirit of the Russian nation. If the land were left in the hands of the nobles, he argued, there would be an oligarchy, and the peasants would scarcely realise, much less appreciate, their freedom, for freedom without land would mean but little to them. It was Pestel who first insisted upon dragging in the people, the masses, and making them participate in the revolution. Yet Pestel was mistaken on both these points. It was not then possible for his friends, the landed aristocracy, to work for a social revolution, neither could the people make common cause with the nobles; at that time their interests were so vastly different.

The revolution of the Decembrists has been styled a "bourgeois movement." If one takes "bourgeois" as being distinct from proletarian, this definition is correct; with the exception of Pestel and a few others the Decembrists were bourgeois in their tendencies. Their constitutional plans, always excepting Pestel, did not speak of universal suffrage. Yet this bourgeois spirit was not the result only of group psychology, but also arose out of the prevailing view-point of Europe which manifested itself clearly in the political literature of that time. "The social questions," writes Herzen, "interested no one in Europe in those days. Gracchus Babeuf, 'the madman

and savage,' was already forgotten. It is true that St. Simon was writing his treatises, but no one read them. Fourier was in the same predicament, whilst few were interested in Robert Owen's *Essays*. Even the most prominent liberals of that period, Benjamin Constant and P. L. Courrier, would have indignantly repudiated Pestel's propositions which were put before a society of very wealthy noblemen, not a club of proletarians." [1] The revolution of the Decembrists, or rather, the ideas of the revolutionaries were, to a certain extent, those which brought about the French Revolution of 1789, which was a bourgeois, *censitaire* regime. It was only on August 19th, 1792, that democracy was established by the introduction of universal suffrage.[2]

We have defined the revolution of the Decembrists as a bourgeois movement, in contradistinction to proletarian, but this statement does not imply that it was made by the bourgeoisie. It was the revolt of a group of nobles, officers and soldiers. The movement was wholly political; these first Russian revolutionaries were anxious to maintain in the social structure of the country all that was possible of the old institutions; they only sacrificed what they were absolutely obliged to sacrifice, and what would have been a direct and flagrant contradiction of political freedom. Serfdom, of course, would have to be abolished. Though not anxious, like Pestel, to gain the people and the peasants as adherents of their

[1] Cf. A. Herzen, *Du développement des idées révolutionnaires en Russie*, London, 1853, p. 67. Pokrovski, *l.c.*, i, p. 102.

[2] Cf. A. Aulard, *Histoire politique de la Révolution Française*, Paris, 1901, p. vi.

movement, the majority of the Decembrists knew that they would have to grant certain things to them, otherwise Jacqueries, such as those led by Pougatshev, would threaten society, and they knew that no constitution could stand against the peasant risings. Yet the basis of their revolutionary movement was practically the old social structure, artistocratic and bourgeois.

Even the republican tendencies of the Southern League in no way contradicted these ideas. To the majority of the conspirators, republicanism meant, not real democracy, but a limitation, or abolition, of monarchy. The opposition to autocracy of the Russian nobility as a group existed long before 1825, and several attempts had already been made by that group to limit the autocratic and monarchic power. Thus, though republicans, the Decembrists were not democrats; a true democrat must logically be also a republican, but a republican need not be a democrat. Not all the Decembrists, as I have shown, were republicans, but all of them were "monarchomachs," or enemies of absolute monarchy.

The Decembrists also made the common mistake of imagining that revolutions are made by individuals, strong men, heroes; that the French Revolution was the work of Danton, Mirabeau and Robespierre, for example. They did not realise that the French Revolution, like all other revolutions, was the logical result of the discontent and ferment of various groups, not of the multitude, but of organised groups, and that it was national and nameless. The individuals render invaluable service, of course; in each group there are always one or two, sometimes more, individuals

who are more capable, more energetic than the others, and who therefore distinguish themselves and become the leaders, but even then they draw their strength, their inspiration, from the masses. The organised groups manifest their will, crystallise their thoughts and give voice to their innermost feelings and needs. The so-called leaders constitute the concrete manifestation of the abstract soul of the masses. Therefore a movement that does not emanate from the masses is doomed to failure.

Napoleon and Nicholas I both seem to have understood this very well. They knew that the groups were animated by a spirit of revolt, but that they were not sufficiently developed to be able to analyse either their feelings or their dormant aspirations, yet if the people were once able to take cognisance of themselves, they would rouse from their lethargy. Therefore, it was both Napoleon's and Nicholas's policy, as well as that of later Tsars, to prevent the people thinking and reasoning. It was for the same reason, to prevent the people thinking, reasoning, analysing or questioning established authority, that Papacy forbade Roman Catholics to read the Bible. The study of the Bible logically led to questioning of the Papal authority, to Protestantism.

Again, the Decembrists imagined that a handful of noblemen could bring about a successful revolution. They neglected the people. Pestel alone understood the spirit of the Russian nation and, perhaps, was the only Decembrist who was a true pioneer to later generations. He understood that a political revolution must be accompanied by a social revolution, otherwise it would only

mean a shifting of power from the hand of one man to those of a clique; this is the case in our day in many of the great Republics and Constitutional Monarchies. Pestel also understood that a revolution must be based upon democracy, and, in an agrarian country like Russia, land and freedom were inseparable for the millions of peasants. "We may proclaim a republic," said Pestel, "but there will be chaos among us; there will be no general, popular rising until we abolish the ownership of the nobles. The peasant requires the land." [1] "Pestel," writes Herzen, "made a mistake; he miscalculated the time, but none the less he was a true prophet."

Yet despite the mistakes of the Decembrists, despite their fate, their conspiracy exercised a profound influence upon later generations, not so much, perhaps, because of their propaganda and theories as because of their example, their heroic attitude in the public square, during their trials, in prison, in the presence of their judges and of the Emperor himself, while in exile and at work in the mines. They broke the silence, they opened a window through which a fresh breath of freedom could penetrate into the soul of the people and awaken from them their passivity. The Russians did not lack liberal or revolutionary ideas, or even realisation of their wrongs, but that audacity and initiative that stimulate thought into action.[2]

It was this that the Decembrists provided. Other groups, seething with discontent, followed the example of the nobles and officers. The

[1] Cf. Pokrovsky, *l.c.*, p. 118; Herzen, *La Conspiration de 1825.*

[2] Cf. Herzen, *l.c.*, p. 68.

bandage fell from the eyes of many, for from the top of their gallows, from the depth of the mines, from their exile, the Decembrists called to the soul of Russia. The revolt was ruthlessly quelled, it is true, but its idea could not be crushed: it remained a living seed destined to blossom and bear fruit in a later generation. Truly, "the cannon shots on the Isaac Square awakened the entire generation" and became the trumpet-call that announced the day of judgment for the house of Romanov.

CHAPTER VI

THE TRIUMPH OF AUTOCRACY

From the Reign of Nicholas I, 1825, until the Emancipation of the Serfs, 1861

Nicholas I looked upon liberalism as something plebeian and an insult to his Imperial dignity. He did his best, or his worst, to crush the spirit of revolt and became the Don Quixote of Absolutism, not only in Russia but in Europe. He believed wholly in militarism, and considered that obedience was the first duty of a subject. The Tsar declared brutally and frankly his belief that autocracy was the only possible happy mode of life for humanity. Anything that even savoured of democracy was a crime. It must be admitted that the Tsar made one or two attempts to reform the bureaucracy in Russia; it was of this band of thieves that he said: "I and my son are the only men in Russia who do not steal." But Nicholas soon convinced himself that it was waste labour. Tsardom relied upon bureaucracy, therefore it became the representative of autocracy, its instrument of oppression, and was consequently despised and hated by the nation.

It seemed as if the Tsar had succeeded in crushing the spirit of revolt in Russia. The country was seamed with a net of spies; it was like a

spider's web in the midst of which sat Beelzebub, the head of the third section who was responsible only to the Tsar himself. In many ways Russia resembled old Venice, for any Russian who even in the innermost recesses of his soul dreamed of freedom carried his life in his hands, as in some unguarded moment his looks would mirror his mind. It was a bitter time for the spirit of revolt; it met with practically no sympathy even from the rest of Europe, for there the autocrat was hailed as the guardian of conservative interests. In order to live, the subjects of Tsar Nicholas had to be hypocrites, for no one can expect an entire nation to become martyrs. Autocracy had triumphed, or so it seemed.

But the Tsar was mistaken. Even during his iron reign, despite the horror and the severity, the spirit of revolt still lived, still hoped, still struggled, still fought to make itself ready to emerge one day to full consciousness of its strength. After all, thought cannot be muzzled; an electric fluid cannot be caught and imprisoned; man's ideas are his own and are impregnable. Russia, at this time, was like a living stream covered with a thick crust of ice. The ice-bound river had stopped the spirit of revolt, but underneath the thick ice sheet the waters were still running, and one day they would break the ice and overflow the banks. Every now and then an effort at revolt was made even during the reign of Nicholas, thus showing the Tsar that Holy Russia was not so immaculate, so unpolluted by the sinful spirit of the age as he had imagined. Thus in 1848 the Petrashevski conspiracy was hatched and discovered.

Early in March of the same year, and but a few days before the news of the Berlin Revolution reached St. Petersburg, Count Perovski, Minister of the Interior, was informed of the existence of a complot, and that secret leaflets composed and printed by Michael Petrashevski, an official at the Ministry, had been distributed. The news made a deep impression upon the Tsar, who thought that he had entirely freed Russia from all revolutionary ideas.

Liprandi was entrusted with the inquiry, and this clever spy soon discovered that Petrashevski had been marked "suspect" by the Secret Police in 1845. He had compiled a dictionary of all the foreign expressions that had been given citizen rights in the Russian language, and he had included various "political allusions"! It was also discovered that Petrashevski had been in the habit of receiving parties of young men in his rooms, and, instead of playing cards or drinking like respectable people, they spent their time discussing plans for new laws, etc. In short, he had formed a literary club.

Liprandi made his report in 1849, a few weeks after Austria had asked the Tsar to help her quell the Hungarian Revolution. Petrashevski and his comrades, thirty-three in number, were arrested and taken to the fortress of SS. Peter and Paul. Among the accused, were eight officials, two chamberlains, four officers of the guard, two authors, two students, one teacher of languages and "one citizen." This proves that the spirit of revolt in Russia which had first manifested itself among the Cossacks and peasants, as shown by their Jacqueries and risings during the seventeenth

and eighteenth centuries, and later among the officers and soldiers, had not, even as late as 1850, penetrated the middle classes, the merchants or working men. These groups only accepted the revolutionary idea during the second half of the nineteenth century.

The inquiry lasted eight months, but sentence was not passed until 1850, after the Hungarian campaign. The young men were accused of being in favour of the "pernicious doctrines" which had gained ground in Western Europe and which threatened to deprive the Western nations of happiness and prosperity. In Holy Russia, where the Government of the Tsar carefully watched all such movements, a few wicked young men, some thoroughly depraved, others merely their victims, had formed a secret society with the intention of overthrowing the Government and introducing anarchy in place of order. Twenty-one of these criminals were condemned to death; among these were Petrashevski and Dostoievski. Nicholas read the sentence and then deigned to commute it. He wrote: "The sentence should be read to the criminals in presence of the troops; then, after the preparations of all minute details preceding the execution, it should be announced that the Emperor had graciously pardoned them, and commuted the death penalty into that of loss of civil right and, according to the degree of their guilt, banishment to the mines, penal servitude, fortress or incorporation in the army."

Once more the Tsar and autocracy had triumphed.[1] The spirit of revolt sighed in exile, in

[1] Cf. J. von Eckhardt, *Nicholaus I—Alexander III*, pp. 63–112.

prison or on the snowfields of Siberia, whilst flatterers and reactionaries sang a hymn of praise and hosannas to the guardian of absolutism and conservative principles. Loudest in this chorus was the voice of Prussia. The land which has since produced the "Hymn of Hate" produced a poet who sang a hymn to the knout: "Hoch die russische Knut" was published in 1852.

I have said that the oppressive measures taken by the Government during the reign of Nicholas I in the endeavour to crush the spirit of revolt in Russia only succeeded outwardly. Governments may imprison their subjects, may torture or kill them; they may prevent freedom of speech, but they can never imprison the mind. "My thoughts are my own, and no power on earth can prevent me *thinking* that which I am not permitted to say aloud." Even in the darkest ages of slavery man's mind was always free. When man clamours for freedom, he really means freedom of his body, or, at the highest, freedom to communicate his thoughts to his fellow men; his mind is always free; he can always think what he will.

But what is the result? Compelled to live introspectively, to concentrate his thoughts, he learns to develop them more fully; he clings to them more fondly, for they constitute his most precious possession, and, when the propitious moment arrives, his crystallised thoughts are sent forth like a fertile stream to water the desert. It is true that during the reign of Nicholas I men were unable to do anything in Russia; their bodies were enslaved, but they thought all the more, and their minds being busy the spirit of revolt grew

stronger and more vigorous while waiting for the opportunity to spread its wings. Educated people read, thought and discussed in secret, whilst the ignorant masses instinctively suffered and brooded, gradually forming opinions, hopes and aspirations. During the last few years of Nicholas' reign a feeling that things could not go on as they had done, that there must soon be a change, was abroad in the land.

Though the number of secret malcontents and *révoltés* greatly increased during the autocratic reign of Nicholas, yet because of the severity of the police and the network of spies, any organised revolutionary party or parties was impossible after the bloody days of 1826. There were only three distinct homesteads, as it were, for the spirit of revolt. These were, firstly, the members of the old boyarin families who had lost favour at Court and been placed on the retired list. Among these were the inheritors of the liberal tendencies of 1825 and the reign of Alexander I. The ideal of this *fronde* was a limitation of absolute monarchy by the aristocracy. Their discontent was stimulated by their hatred of the ever-increasing influence of the Court and military camarilla, which were mostly German. The universities made another homestead. Here a new and fresh life was developing despite the numerous government restrictions that dealt with every detail, from the lectures to the life and dress of the students; they endeavoured to militarise the universities.

Then suddenly there arose an opportunity which autocracy had hoped to use for its own purposes, but which soon proved of great help to the growing ferment. This was the Crimean War. The

wars which Russian autocracy has waged since 1812 have always been reflected in the internal policy of the country, and have had a deep and far-reaching effect upon the development of the national consciousness. Until 1812, the wars waged by autocracy had passed almost unnoticed by the masses of the nation. The specifically Russian patriotism set burning by Rostoptshin's torches, changed into a new flame, the flame of cosmopolitan—ecstasy for freedom, freedom of nations, which in the course of a century has not yet been extinguished. The events of 1825, though apparently a failure, had sown seeds in fertile ground. A system was gradually being prepared which was diametrically opposed to that of Nicholas I. Nicholas had triumphed over Russia, triumphed over democracy in 1848, during the Hungarian campaign, and the slaves and flatterers of Tsardom were convinced that if the Tsar wished, he could triumph over Europe.

Nicholas had failed. The bankruptcy of Russia was proved; the idol had feet of clay. Russia's thinking sons, children of revolt, were genuinely sorry and suffered deeply over the fall of Sebastopol, but, nevertheless, they were convinced that the true happiness and welfare of the nation, as distinguished from Tsardom, had nothing to fear from the Anglo-French victories at Inkermann and on the banks of the Tshernaya, and that the fall of Saragossa would render a greater service to Russia than those who had stormed Malakoff.[1] For a quarter of a century Nicholas' will had been law, not only for Russia but for Europe. He alone had been able to cry "stop" to the storm

[1] Cf. J. von Eckhardt, *Russland vor und nach dem Kriege*, p. 327.

of revolution, to the demands of democracy, to crush every liberal thought and gesture of freedom. The Tsar, it was thought, must return of course triumphant and victorious, and the Tsar's victories would be another of Tsardom's holds upon the nation. But autocracy failed, for the armies of the Tsar were beaten.

In the midst of the war Nicholas died. His megalomania had received a check, his dreams of omnipotence were shattered by stern reality, so he died. His deathbed must have been a torture, like that of the Roman Emperor Tiberius. Who knows but that Tsar Nicholas I, in a prophetic vision, saw the forces of revolution gathering strength and finally triumphing over Tsardom, and his great-grandson, the second Nicholas, giving up the struggle, abdicating and being sent to Siberia in the midst of another war, with Russia this time as an ally of the very powers he was then fighting? Imperial and human tragi-comedy! On the threshold of death this champion of autocracy, this enemy of liberalism may have had a glimpse into the future and heard the sighs and curses of his numerous victims, all of whom he had sacrificed to the Moloch of Tsardom. If Nicholas I had no prophetic vision, at least one knows that he would die of shock could he but rise and see the Russia of to-day. If the dead are aware of the doings of the living and can turn in their graves, then, surely, the Tsar Nicholas must be in a perpetual whirl!

The autocrat died. Official Russia mourned and lamented over his Imperial grave, but the revolutionary spirit, the spirit of revolt, uttered a sigh of relief in its prison house. France and

England paid a tribute *de convenance*, whilst Berlin and its Knutophiles deplored the disappearance of the autocrat. The revolutionaries of Russia drew new breath when Alexander II ascended the throne. It seemed as if the dawn of liberty had risen on Russia's horizon and that, at last, the long-expected and hoped-for renaissance was at hand. The demand for freedom, for the abolition of serfdom and the introduction of liberal, Western institutions became louder. The aspirations of Russian society and the Russian nation found its expression in Alexander Herzen, an exile living in London who had founded *The Bell*, in which he published his political programmes. I shall deal with Herzen's ideas in a subsequent chapter. Suffice it here to say that what Herzen practically demanded was the abolition of serfdom, the censorship and corporal punishment.

Alexander II was one of the most liberal minded members of the house of Romanov, but it should be borne in mind that even in his case his liberal measures and reforms were not so much the result of an impulsive movement as brought about by two external factors: public opinion and popular discontent. Alexander stated his decision to introduce reforms into Russia. The spirit of revolt was still too inexperienced to know that a Romanov could not grant a constitution, he must either be an autocrat or abdicate. Thus every one believed that a new era had dawned on Russia. The Russian opposition, the heirs and successors of the Decembrists, the men who had sighed and hoped or brooded and despaired during the reign of Nicholas I, never dreamed of replying: *Tout ou rien*, as their successors of 1917, grown grey and

experienced in suffering, will say. They greeted the Emperor's promises with exuberant joy and hailed his declaration that "it is better to abolish serfdom by an act of government coming from above, than to wait until it was abolished from below by the people themselves."

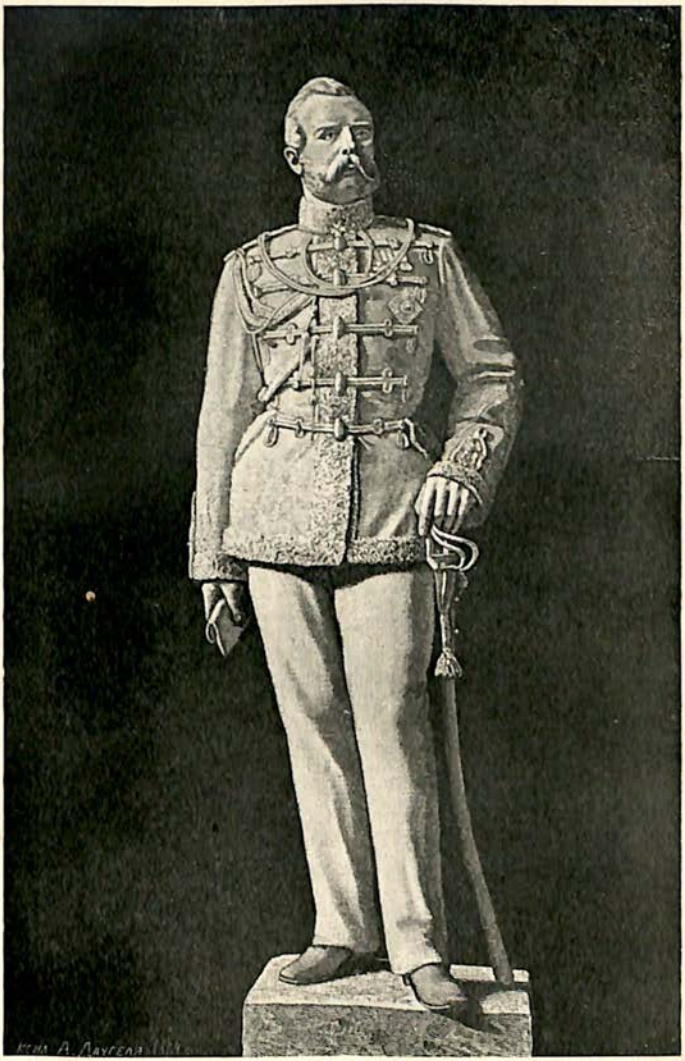
Russian liberals and revolutionaries greeted the young monarch bent upon liberal reforms and measures with great enthusiasm. Every one was confident and full of hopes for a glorious future. Millions would obtain freedom without a revolution, without bloodshed. The Tsar himself was inspired by the best and most liberal intentions, and decided to make a clean sweep of the past and a *tabula rasa* of the régime of Nicholas I. Herzen hailed Alexander II as a deliverer, and heaped blessing upon his Imperial head. He compared him to Peter the Great, and exclaimed: "For the moment the spirit of revolt had voluntarily cut off its wings and was dazzled by the golden cage which the representative of autocracy was dangling before its eyes." [1]

The great day, February 19th, 1861, arrived. On this historical day serfdom was abolished in Russia by Imperial decree. Thus millions of slaves obtained a semblance of freedom; it was granted them, not as an act of justice, but as a crust thrown to a beggar. And the masses were expected to hail this crowned liberator as a heaven-sent saviour! The poor, deluded fools did not realise that he was only restoring to them their own property, their liberty, of which they had been deprived by his predecessors. They did not even have the satisfaction of feeling that they

[1] *The Bell*, 1858, No. 9.

were the conquerors; that they as victors had dictated conditions to a conquered foe and usurper. No, it was an act of grace on the part of the autocrat, and the world applauded him for it. Neither the Russian revolutionaries nor the people had any realisation of the deep humiliation of that method of obtaining their freedom.

Alas, both the joy and the hope were of very short duration. It was but natural that the governing classes, all landed slaveowners, should, with a few exceptions, be disinclined to yield up such a lucrative source of income. The Russian landed proprietor of those days led a life of happy, idle luxury, a perfect *dolce far niente*. Slaves worked for him; his "souls" piled up money that he might rush off to Paris now and then and spend it freely. The governing classes could not and would not solve the question radically. The slaves were liberated, men were set free, but the economic situation was far from having been ameliorated. The agrarian question had not been solved as the liberals, revolutionaries and socialists had trusted it would. The peasants did not receive the land they had been cultivating, for the greatest part of the soil still remained in the possession of the proprietors. Moreover, the peasants did not receive what land was allotted to them free of expense: they had to pay heavy rents and taxes; in many cases, indeed, the taxes came to more than the peasant could earn by the cultivation of his land. Therefore, the liberated slaves were economically much worse off than before. Hence the strange phenomenon of men and women, nominally free and their own masters, sighing miserably for the happy, halcyon days of serfdom.



TSAR ALEXANDER II MONUMENT.
(By Antokolsky.)

After having celebrated the feast of freedom, the Russian peasant wept for the flesh pots of slavery. The peasants themselves believed that the Tsar had decreed that they should receive the land, but that the landowners refused to give it up. The Moujiks clung to this belief for many years; indeed, it has only quite recently, thanks to the energetic propaganda organised by the revolutionaries, been eradicated. As for the intellectuals they immediately understood that the Government did not really intend to break with the past, and that Alexander himself could not belie the autocratic tendencies of his father.[1]

In a word, the reforms of Alexander, especially the emancipation of serfdom, did not have the expected results. The Tsar had made an initial mistake, a mistake that Tsars and autocrats are bound to make: he wished to appear liberal and yet remain an autocrat. The same mistake, in the opposite sense, is often made by apostles of liberty and democracy: they proclaim the principle of nationality in the same breath as universal peace; they attempt to be national patriots and international socialists at one and the same time, not seeming to realise that these are contradictory ideas.

On the other hand, the emancipation of the serfs annoyed the aristocrats and landowners, idealistically inclined though these were. They were far from pleased with the reality, for it caused them to lose their source of revenue, whilst the moujiks, liberty-struck, asked for more. The peasants had heard of and hoped for "freedom," but in the simplicity of their minds they had

[1] Cf. Golovatshev, p. 6.

imagined this freedom to be something quite different from what it proved to be in reality. They had fondly imagined that all the ground which they, as serfs, had cultivated for the seigneurs, would become their absolute property, free of rates and taxes. The discontent of the masses therefore grew; they were in a constant state of seething fermentation. The intellectuals, seeing the discontent and excitement of the peasants, imagined that a peasant revolution was at hand which would, like a human hurricane, sweep aside and destroy the old régime and pull down the bulwarks of autocracy.

But the hopes of the revolutionaries were premature. The peasants were angry, but their anger was against the nobility and the seigneurs, not against the autocracy or Tsardom. However, the peasants, though dissatisfied, resigned themselves to the existing state of affairs. It was not yet possible for the intellectual revolutionary element to enlighten the peasants: firstly, because the peasants distrusted the intellectuals—whom they looked upon as mere seigneurs—and also because their social and political consciousness was but slightly developed; and secondly, the intellectuals had not learnt how to penetrate the masses and make them listen to them. The intellectuals themselves were quite convinced that Russia could expect nothing from autocracy, and that her people would have to use force to secure their liberty or any true reforms; they could not hope to receive them as gifts from the Tsar.

The peasants, among them the Stenka Razins and Pougatshevs had stirred revolt as long as they were serfs, were not satisfied with the new order

of things. They were told that in Western Europe there were neither taxes, conscription nor passports, that the people were the real rulers, whilst the Tsars were subject to the sovereign will of the nation. The intelligent or educated classes also had their own special grievance. "Why," they asked, "should the Government grant liberty to the serfs only and none to the other classes of society? Why should not the nobles have access to the best posts and positions in the Government; why should they not be appointed as officials and functionaries with good salaries?"

But the Tsar, despite his good intentions, was afraid to do this, to open the doors of the high official positions to all of his subjects. He had already alienated the sympathy and loyalty of the seigneurs; he had deprived them of their "baptized property" and therefore of a large source of revenue. Birth, and not merit, consequently continued to be the *open sesame* of lucrative administrative posts. The *tshin* was maintained, bureaucracy flourished and its privileges were increased. The students of the middle classes, sons of merchants and clergymen, when their studies were finished, found all administrative posts closed to them, for there the nobility held sway.

On the other hand, the smaller landowners were dissatisfied because, unable any longer to have their land cultivated by serfs, they were obliged to employ hired labour, and therefore soon saw themselves on the brink of ruin. They sold their land and then sought State employment, and the Government favoured them. Yet there was not room for all of them, so the unlucky ones swelled the ranks of the discontented.

We have seen how the spirit of revolt worked in the Orthodox Church; a great number of the revolutionaries were drawn from the sons of the priests, veritable pariahs of Russian society. It had long been the custom that the sons of the clergy should enter the priesthood, but, unfortunately, the sons were more plentiful than the posts, with the result that a steadily increasing clerical proletariat class was formed. They were subject to many restrictions, since they were not nobles but merely the sons of priests. All the liberal professions were closed to them, and they could only aspire to the lower rungs of the administrative ladder. It was but natural for these malcontents to swell the ranks of the revolutionaries and foster the spirit of revolt.

Another class, or rather, a nationality, furnished many recruits to the revolutionary standard. They were the natural apostles of revolt against Tsardom and autocracy. They knew what the French Revolution had done for their co-religionists. But it must be admitted that the Jews were not alone in being persecuted for their religious opinions. It is erroneous to speak of other causes; all the other trumped-up causes were merely pretexts for persecution. Persecution is always the result of religious fanaticism, whatever other reason may be put forward. Alexander, however, was more tolerant towards sectarians than to the Jews. He considered himself the head of the Greek Orthodox Faith, and endeavoured to increase its prestige as distinguished from the Church officials. The Government persistently endeavoured to force the Catholics to join the Greek Orthodox Church; many of the Catholic churches were closed

and the Catholics forbidden to correspond with Rome.

The army also was a hotbed of revolt. It must be borne in mind that conscription, as it then existed in Russia, was not conscription of free citizens gathered to defend their country against an invader, but of the slaves of autocracy. Men were ruthlessly torn from their homes and families and sent out to fight, not *pro aris et focis*, but in the interests of Tsardom, of Imperialistic plans and tendencies. Such a state of affairs naturally fostered the spirit of revolt in the hearts of the Russian soldiers, who, though clad in the military uniform, were yet Slavs. Many of the soldiers were former political offenders who had been incorporated, by force, into the army. The natural result was that these "criminals" did not let any opportunity slip of preaching and fostering the spirit of revolt among their comrades. However, it was not only the soldiers, corporals, sergeants and sub-officers who had grievances, for, since it was the custom for all the higher army posts to be given to the noble by birth, men of merit and distinction were passed over. Ambitious soldiers who had distinguished themselves on the battle-field were excluded from the officer ranks; these were filled by young nobles fresh from the military school. These military malcontents furnished a large contingent of the revolutionaries.

Thus, discontent was increasing in various groups, social, national and religious. The spirit of revolt was again raising its wings. The forces of revolution were gathering, the doom of Tsardom was approaching, the invisible hand was already writing its "Mene, mene, tekel upharsin" upon

the wall. But though the forces were accumulating in the various strata of Russian society, they were scattered and lacked unity, organisation, cohesion. Discontent and revolt were spreading slowly but surely, yet, since the interests of the various groups were so diverse, centralisation was difficult of attainment. There were wide gulfs between the groups, many of whom were jealous of the others; it has taken decades to make these understand and trust one another. When all the groups realised that however different their interests might be, they had one object in common—the abolition of Tsardom and autocracy—they were able to reach their full power. It became the work of the Russian intellectuals, philosophers and sociologists to teach this truth, to show the various groups that before a new Russian State could be built upon the ruins of Tsardom, the latter would have to be torn down, and, to do that, the revolutionary forces would have to concentrate; all the blind forces would have to run the one way and that the right way. Thus these Russian philosophers and sociologists gave articulate voice to what the masses were only vaguely and inarticulately feeling.

CHAPTER VII

LITTÉRATEURS, PHILOSOPHERS AND SOCIOLOGISTS

It has sometimes been asserted that the French philosophers of the eighteenth century contributed but little to the great French upheaval; that even if Rousseau had never written, the doctrine of popular sovereignty would, in any case, have asserted itself in France sooner or later. The spirit of restlessness and discontent had long been prevalent in France. When Lord Chesterfield visited the country in 1753, he said that the symptoms indicative of great changes in government were then present. On this account it is argued that all that Voltaire, Rousseau, Condorcet, Mably, Morelli and others did was to give voice and expression to latent feelings. It would probably be truer to say that the French philosophers sowed the seed of revolution by scattering new ideas on soil prepared to receive them. The same service has been rendered Russia by her philosophers. Russia—real Russia, not the Russia of the Romanovs—has long been vaguely craving for reform; her philosophers have taught her how to give more or less definite shape to the vague aspirations already in the hearts of the multitude.

During the reign of Catherine II the political,

social, and philosophical ideas of the eighteenth century gained numerous adherents in Russia. Few, however, were the men capable of really assimilating the theories of Voltaire and the Encyclopædists. The influence of Freemasonry was more lasting. Basing itself upon Christianity instead of breaking with it, Russian Freemasonry aimed not so much at political and social reforms as at the perfection of the individual. Yet, indirectly, it exercised a certain influence upon the political and social ideals of the day. Fighting as it did against national and religious fanaticism, it necessarily had to point out existing abuses, and to condemn them. Its work was consequently critical, as well as constructive. While in Germany Freemasonry was of a mystical character, in Russia it became an ethical and organising movement; it grouped together men of thought and independent judgment and enabled them to exercise an influence upon the masses.

One of the most prominent figures among the masonic societies in Russia under Catherine II was Novikov. In his paper, the *Utrenyi Sviet*, he not only advocated a high ethical ideal, but also carried on a vigorous polemic against Catherine's foreign policy, and the warfare it devolved. He said that war, except for defence, should be altogether abhorred. For some time Catherine—herself a disciple of Voltaire and a friend of Diderot—allowed Novikov to continue his philanthropic and ethical Christian work, but the outbreak of the French Revolution altered her views. She then saw in every manifestation of independent social thought a political agitation. Consequently, the masonic lodges were closed and Novikov

himself, in spite of his advanced age, was thrown into the dungeons of Schlusselburg. His work may be regarded as the first sprouting of independent thought in Russia, the first expression of a craving for freedom. It was hazy, vague and mainly humanitarian and ethical, for the philosopher never dared to include in his programme the reorganisation of society and of the State. Nevertheless it was a subversive movement, as it tended to create an independent public opinion in Russia, and thus to provide the first essential requisite for any social upheaval.

Towards the end of Catherine's reign, timid voices demanding social reforms began to be heard. Russian intellectuals who had come under the influence of Rousseau's doctrine that all men are born equal, were not content with the spectacle of the few living in luxury whilst the many were starving. One of the most noteworthy of the many precursors of revolutionary thought in Russia at this period was Radishtshev, the author of *A Journey from Moscow to St. Petersburg*, an avowed and famous imitation of Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*. Radishtshev did not dare to demand political changes, though he was definitely an opponent of absolutism. He specially urged the need for agrarian reforms. He created no organisation and no party; he only gave expression to the ever-growing unrest of the Russian intellectuals who had absorbed the philosophical, political and social doctrines of Western Europe. He was finally arrested, tried and condemned to death; but Catherine, *cabotine* that she was, showed herself magnanimous, and commuted his sentence to that of exile to Siberia for ten years. Paul I re-

called the exile, as he did many others whom his mother had punished, and Alexander I invited him to take part in a legislative commission. But Radishtshev found that his radical ideas were too advanced for the Russia of his day; discouraged and weary of life, he committed suicide in September 1802.

How many have been swallowed up by the Moloch autocracy and cut off in the prime of life! How many a noble existence has been crushed in those living tombs where Russian autocracy constantly flung her best and noblest citizens, whose only crime may be summed up in one word —Thought! Russia's poets and prophets, Russia's thinkers and philosophers, Russia's Bakunins, Herzens and Kropotkins either suffered this fate, or were in constant danger of it overtaking them. The words, "Woe unto the nations who stone prophets!" may rightly be applied in modern times to Russia of the Tsars. The fate of Radishtshev calls to our mind the names of many Russian authors, poets and thinkers who perished whilst the noble family of Romanov presided over the destinies of the Russian nation. If not exactly stoned, the Russian poets and authors—the prophets of modern times—met with suffering and premature death. They were either hanged or sent to Siberia among the lowest and most depraved criminals.

"The history of Russian thinkers," Alexander Herzen once exclaimed, "is a long list of martyrs and a register of convicts." In Russia a terrible destiny awaited those who dared to step beyond the line traced by the Government, or who ventured to look over the wall erected by Imperial

Ukase. Even in the most civilised countries of Western Europe, ever and anon a cross-current of reaction has traversed the stream of intellectual evolution; narrow-minded zealots, hypocritical bigots, false prophets and literary Gibeonites, gossiping old women arrayed in the mantles of philosophers, have done their best to put fetters on the independent thought of man, to nip free intellectual development in the very bud, and crush it under the iron heel of tradition and authority.

But in Western Europe these reactionary tendencies are, and have been, mere temporary aberrations; it was not so in Russia. There, the thinkers, whose lives were spared by the paternal Imperial Government of the Tsars, died in the zenith of their youth before they had time fully to develop; they withered like blossoms hurrying to quit life before they could bear fruit. Their number was legion, but I shall mention at least a few of those Russian authors whose glorious talent and melancholy fate add to the ignominy of Tsardom's history.

Ryleev (1795–1826), a poet of considerable talent, was hanged with four others in 1826 by order of Tsar Nicholas I.

Prince Odoievsky (1802–39), whose poems are full of poignancy and pathos, was sent to Siberia, where he had to live as an ordinary soldier. He was not the only Russian author forced to serve in the army as a punishment for daring to speak the truth; indeed, the Tsar and his Government seemed to look upon the army as a sort of convict prison.

Griboyedov (1794–1829), who is Russia's Beau-

marchais and the author of the comedy *Gore-ot Oumah*, or *Too much Intelligence comes to Grief*, met with so many obstacles in his literary career and was so disgusted with the intellectual and moral state of the Russia of his day that suicide seemed to him the only way out; he finally went to Persia, where he was murdered.

The promising poet and philosopher Venevitinov (1805–27) died in his twenty-third year, a victim of social circumstances.

The fiery poet, Alexander Polezhaev (1810–38) attracted the attention of Nicholas I by his satirical poem *Sashka*, which was secretly circulated among his fellow students. The poet was therefore expelled from the university and condemned to serve as a private in a Caucasian regiment. The soldier-poet sought oblivion of his misery in drink, and finally died in a military hospital, aged twenty-eight. The manner in which Polezhaev was treated by the Tsar was very characteristic of the Romanovs, who committed all their crimes against man's freedom *in a spirit of clemency.*

Nicholas I ordered Polezhaev to appear before him and to read the offending poem aloud. The Tsar then *kissed* the student on the forehead as an appreciation of his talent, and then ordered that he should enlist in a regiment. This was very evidently done with the view of breaking the independent spirit of the poet, of crushing the rising genius by cutting his wings. But this cruel joke was not an exception on the part of the late Imperial Government of Russia.

In 1836, Tshaadaev, the friend of Schelling and the author of *L'Apologie d'un Fou*, published a

letter in French in which, Prometheus-like, he cast his curse into the face of Russia. He told her in clear and precise words that her past was useless, her present superfluous and her future hopeless. Tshaadaev's letter was a trumpet-call by which he hoped to rouse Russia from her sleep of inertia. But his voice was soon silenced. The Government did not punish him, but—by order of the Tsar—*Tshaadaev was declared mad.*

Bestuzhev-Marlinsky (1795–1837), the founder of "Romantic Criticism" in Russia, was sent to the mines for a few years and died in the Caucasus.

Byelinsky (1810–48), the Russian Lessing and famous literary critic, who exercised an immense influence upon Russian literature, died of privation in his thirty-eighth year. When the Government of the Tsars did not openly condemn the talented men to a life of misery in the mines or army, or to degradation and death, it put so many obstacles in their way that they were driven to despair, and died miserably while still in the flush of youth, victims of oppression, crushed under the iron heel of tyranny.

The famous Russian novelist Dostoievsky, the eminent psychologist who, with critical scalpel in hand, analysed the Russian soul and laid bare its most hidden cells, was sent to Siberia for four years; there he lived among thieves and murderers. Later he served as a private in a Siberian regiment. And how many were there who were crushed before they really had time to raise their voices? Few had sufficient strength of character to hide their emotions and the burning fire of

enthusiasm in the innermost depths of their soul without being consumed by their inward flame. Few, indeed, were those who, with fetters on hands and feet, succeeded in keeping their heads erect and their spirits independent.

The great Russian poet Pushkin, liberty-thirsting and revolutionary, was exiled to the Caucasus. He returned home, but very shortly had to choose between a second term of exile or the title and uniform of Imperial Chamberlain. He chose the latter.

If Tolstoi was spared, it was not because the government of the Tsars was afraid of European opinion and did not dare to touch him, but rather because the author of *Resurrection* was in reality quite harmless. Indeed, the Government, on the contrary, availed itself of his doctrine of passive resistance, of castration of the will and submission, for its own purposes.

Russian literature, therefore, under the rule of the Tsars had a hard struggle. During the first half of the nineteenth century it was principally the product of the middle nobility. It bore the impress of and reflected the ideas and conceptions of this social group. It supported the tendencies and ideas of monarchy, even of autocracy. Yet side by side with this officially legal literature, there were small intellectual groups that inclined towards broader and wider conceptions of life. These intellectuals were able to rise above class and group influence and to deal with the interests of society in general, thus emancipating themselves from narrow traditionalism and egoism. These were the men who, with the power of true seers, grasped the idea of evolution and historical

development and foresaw the coming changes, so necessary and yet so fatal.[1]

The liberal tendencies which were promulgated in Russian literature during the first quarter of the nineteenth century were not unique phenomena in the history of Russia's development. They were links in a long chain. The seeds that had been sown continued to blossom and bear fruit. Politically, 1825 proved a tragic turning-point, but though the autocratic government of Nicholas made outward liberal manifestations almost impossible, the work of thought never stopped its slow evolution. New ideals and ideas took hold of and charmed Russian poets and philosophers. In the place of the Hegelian philosophy, which during the first quarter of the nineteenth century had captured the minds of Russian thinkers, new currents of thought swept in and reflected themselves in scientific and philosophical productions.

Thus, in spite of the strict censorship, a healthy intellectual life flourished in Russia during the reign of Nicholas I. In the history of Russian *belles-lettres*, it was a period of glorious blossoming: Pushkin, Gogol, Lermontov and others wrote their masterpieces in those days. They prepared the spiritual atmosphere, the different currents of thought and æsthetic tendencies upon which the new social and political ideals and ideas were founded. They formed the stimulus for all future movements, for all the great events which have culminated in the great upheaval of to-day.

Autocracy could muzzle the press, but it could not control thought. Russian intellectuals con-

[1] Cf. M. N. Pokrovsky, *Russian History in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. ii, pp. 379–80.

tinued to think that which they were not permitted to say aloud, or to write openly. They accumulated ideas and spread them slowly and persistently. Though some yielded to the despair to which Lermontov gave expression, others clothed their thoughts in criticism or satire, a form of literature which oppression always fosters and develops. As they were not allowed to write criticisms of the Government or directly to promulgate liberal ideas, they wrote novels and comedies: Gogol, his *Revisor* and *Dead Souls*, and Griboyedov, his *Gore ot Oumah*, in which officialdom in Russia was criticised and ridiculed. The press also, muzzled though it was, found means to convey its criticisms between the lines. The Russians, in fact, developed to perfection the fine art—hitherto unknown in Western Europe—of *dodging the censor!*

Meanwhile Hegel's philosophy had made its appearance in Russia and found numerous followers. Officially, the Hegelian system was considered to be a conservative doctrine, therefore the Russian Government put no embargo upon it. Thus, in the place of the clear, lucid, humanitarian, revolutionary doctrines of the French philosophers, came the abstract, heavy, nebulous German metaphysics. Russian society, not permitted to grapple directly with political problems, as the Encyclopædists had done, adopted the language of the abstract borrowed from German philosophy. The influence of German philosophy upon Russia has been most pernicious, by encouraging abstract reasoning and theorising in place of practical politics. But, temporarily, the discussion of German metaphysics had its advantages, for it enabled Russian thinkers to speak in philosophical terms



H. Lopatin.



Michael Bakunin.



Social Democrats in the First Duma.

not too easily comprehended of the censors of Nicholas I. Utopian socialism, too, that looked for the liberation of humanity, not to a revolution but to a moral and spiritual resurrection, slipped over the frontier without being suspected by the Tsar's censors.

Thus, Russian philosophers were able to open to Russian readers a whole world of new ideas, and to discuss, in carefully veiled language, the bases of religion and authority, and even Tsardom itself. Groups were formed in various cities to discuss social and political questions. Aksakov, Khomyakov, Bakunin, Herzen and Ogarev met at the house of Stankevitsh. It was in this atmosphere that the seed sown by the Decembrists took root and proved itself stronger than brute force.

Among the writers who gave most vigorous expression to these ideas was Alexander Herzen, who has justly been called the Russian Voltaire. No one could write the history of the French Revolution without referring to Rousseau, Voltaire or Montesquieu, although they did not take a direct and active part in the great upheaval of 1789. Just as little could the name of Alexander Herzen and his activity be overlooked when the movement of Russian liberation from the yoke of autocracy is discussed. Yet Herzen was not a revolutionary in the strictest sense of the word, though he was one of the prominent pioneers and forerunners of the Russian Revolution. Herzen's talent was too vast to be satisfied with the limited field of politics; literature—a much greater domain—attracted him, and it was in her realm that he laboured and developed his genius and activity.

Alexander Herzen was born on March 25th,

1812, at Moscow, shortly before the city was invaded by Napoleon. At Stuttgart, his father had fallen in love with a young lady, Louise Haag, who, according to some, was of Jewish extraction. He married her, but never legalised his marriage. Alexander Herzen was the child of this love union. His father's name was Ivan Alexeyevitsh Jakovlev, but he gave his son the surname of Herzen, "for," he said, "he is the child of my heart." [1]

Herzen studied at the University of Moscow, together with his cousin Ogarev, who became his most intimate friend and companion. In 1834 Herzen was exiled to Perm, on the outskirts of Siberia, by order of Nicholas I, whose great-grandson, Nicholas II, has but recently travelled the same road by order of the Provisional Government! In 1840 Herzen came back to Petrograd, but was again exiled, this time to Novgorod. He returned to Moscow in 1842. But a strange change had taken place among his old friends; their former enthusiasm and revolutionary ardour had cooled down, and many who had been iconoclastic and subversive in theory, paused and hesitated when they were faced with hard, stern reality and compelled to carry into practice what they had so lightly accepted in theory. After the death of his father in 1847, Herzen obtained permission to leave Russia, to which he never returned. The dawn of approaching revolution was tinting with orient hues the sombre sky of conservative and dynastic Europe. Liberalism was knocking at the doors of the old feudal castles of Mediaevalism. Herzen was in Rome in 1847–48, and in France in 1848–50. In Paris he became the friend of the

[1] Cf. Alexander Herzen, *Erinnerungen*, Berlin, 1907, p. iii.

most advanced Republicans, and especially of Proudhon, to whose paper, *La Voix du Peuple*, he contributed. In view of recent events it is interesting to note Herzen's description of his meeting with Mazzini (Herzen's *Memoirs*).

"Ledru-Rollin," said Mazzini, "is the most amiable man in the world, but Frenchman 'jusqu'au bout des ongles'; he is firmly convinced that Europe cannot make any steps forward without a Revolution in France! *Le peuple initiateur!* But where do we see initiative at present in France? The ideas which have moved France have come from Italy and England. You will see, Italy will begin the era of revolution. What do you think?"

"I must confess I do not believe it."

"Perhaps the Slavonic world?" said Mazzini smiling.

"I did not say that, but I think it probable that no revolution will succeed in Europe, so long as France remains in a state of torpor."

"France is asleep," replied Mazzini, "and we are going to wake her up."

In London Herzen decided to consecrate his time, energy and fortune to the work of acquainting Europe with Russian despotism and the terrible state of serfdom that reigned there, as well as to endeavour to wake up Russia herself to her possibilities. He published *The Polar Star* and *The Bell* (Kolokol), which penetrated into Russia, in spite of the censor, and was read at the Court of Petrograd and even by Tsar Alexander II. In 1861, Bakunin, who had escaped from Siberia, arrived in London and soon gained a preponderating influence over Herzen and Ogarev. He per-

suaded them to support the Polish Insurrection, a step that Herzen later regretted deeply, as the Polish revolt found but little sympathy among the democratic circles in Russia, and consequently *The Bell* lost many of its regular Russian readers.

In 1864 Herzen and Ogarev went to Geneva, and in 1869 *The Bell* ceased publication. Herzen then settled in Paris, where he died in 1870. Herzen's most important work is his *Memoirs*, which appeared in an English translation, under the title of *My Exile*, in 1855. The *Memoirs* have been called "a drama of a great moral personality," "of a reformer and a revolutionary who suffered shipwreck on the shoals of this world; the tragedy of an idea yearning for realisation." His *Memoirs* show the life's battle of a politician who was anxious to shape all human existence after certain ethical models, and whom the resistance of the stupid world drove back into the solitude of his ideals, to the Pisgah heights of thought where he could cool his burning brow, to the lifeless silence of his solitary chamber.

In the realm of pure philosophy Herzen endeavoured to reconcile and harmonise the two conflicting principles of social life: individual liberty and collective action.[1] This problem, he contended, cannot be settled by fixed laws. It has to be worked out separately and distinctly in each period of time, with variations for each country.

His political ideal was a federal republic for the Slavonic nations of Russia; Poland to be independent. He was in favour of the communal system of peasant holdings, and argued that this system would make it easier to introduce the new

[1] *Vom Anderen Ufer*, vol. v, pp. 156–241.

social order and save Russia from the domination of capital and the bourgeoisie. Indeed, Herzen, without being a Slavophil, saw in Russia a better prospect for a social revolution than in old Europe, because in his judgment the Russian was less a slave of the past. The rest of Europe has passed through so many revolutions that the individual cannot take a step without stumbling upon reminiscences of the past which crush the spirit of progress, whereas in Russia the individual has no past to forget.

Herzen understood the psychology of his nation better than any one. The Russians are absolute in good as in evil, in affirmation of their rights as in their passive obedience. Liberal politics appear to the Russians a mere mockery of the real idea of the sovereignty of the people and of the rule of democracy. They know autocracy or democracy, but no middle course, no compromise. A new label on the old bottle would never satisfy them. A monarchic protestantism, called a constitutional monarchy, would never appeal to the soul of Russia. Yet Herzen was not an opponent of the State in the sense of the anarchic ideal which demands the complete abolition of the State principle. He was in favour of a "confraternity of nations" rather than a "confraternity of men!" The State, however, had no claim to existence *per se*; it was merely an organising function of the life of the people, and therefore was bound to adapt itself to all the developments and changes of the popular life. The State was the servant of the people, not its master, as is the conception of the Western socialists.

The manifesto of Alexander II announcing the

liberation of the serfs confirmed Herzen's hopes for Russia's future, and his optimism was at first shared by the famous economist and critic, Tshernyshevski. As a philosopher, Tshernyshevski was, to a certain extent, a follower of Feuerbach's materialistic philosophy, whilst his ideas upon the future state of society were based upon the doctrines of St. Simon and Fourier. Like Herzen, Tshernyshevski attributed much importance to the system of communal property. This system, he said, was already known to the people in Russia, and therefore they were prepared for the realisation of the socialist régime, whilst in Europe the system of individual property would be in the way. Russia could either at once introduce pure collectivism, or, at least, shorten the period of private property considerably. Tshernyshevski was of the opinion that the organised masses were entitled to exercise a democratic control over the Government, but, considering the existing absence of education among the people, reforms would have to come from above. In order, however, to pave the way for such reforms, a movement from below, a conspiracy, a revolt even, would be necessary. Every nation should have a right to decide its own destiny; consequently, not only should Poland be independent, but the Ukraine also should receive autonomy.

Tshernyshevski's famous novel *What is to be Done?* (*Tshto-Dyelatj*) had a practical influence upon revolutionary tendencies in Russia. It was written, while in prison, for the *Contemporary Review* (*Sovremennik*), and was passed by the censor. This means that the work contains no clear and definite political ideas. It is, how-

ever, full of subversive theories on metaphysical and religious questions, family life and private property. At first the authorities judged the novel to be a work of pure fiction only, but the Russian public could read between the lines, and finally the censorship grew alarmed and confiscated the book.

CHAPTER VIII

PHILOSOPHERS AND SOCIOLOGISTS
(continued)

Material and Moral Discontent

During the first years of Alexander's reign, new social ideas and ideals developed: ideals not only of political freedom and social equality, but also of religion, philosophy and a conception of the world in general. The most characteristic of these new currents of thought were Realism, Rationalism and Utilitarianism, a glorification of life and freedom. The immediate result was a tendency to criticise everything mercilessly and to submit all things to a close analysis and pass them through the crucible of reason. The adherents of this rationalism were not afraid of the radical deductions of their thoughts and arguments; they had entirely lost their reverence and awe for tradition.

One of the by-results of the realism and rationalism of this period was Nihilism. Nihilism has often been confounded and identified with bombs and dynamite, with anarchy and terror, but, in reality, Nihilism is merely an intellectual current of thought. At first, it was a cult of extreme individualism that took the human personality as

its starting point and concentrated all its efforts and endeavours upon the emancipation of man from the factors of social life. Nihilism was not concerned with the people as a social collectivity, but with man as an individual, man bound and oppressed by chains and shackles of all kinds, intellectual and moral. Nihilism, therefore, criticised religion, family and marriage relations, and the numerous prejudices created by custom and tradition. Turgeniev masterfully drew a perfect type of a Nihilist in his novel *Fathers and Sons*. It is said that he was the first to use the expression Nihilism; but, as a matter of fact, J. de Maistre had already spoken of "rienism" in his correspondence.[1]

Russian Nihilism was not an aspiration towards the Néant, but, on the contrary, towards reality, enjoyment of terrestial possessions and pleasures. It was optimistic and revolutionary, in contradistinction to the fatalism, pessimism and spirit of resignation of India. In its indignation against human and social iniquity, Nihilism railed against tradition and the State as the responsible agents of human misery; it preached destruction with a view to the pleasure of building up. "La joie de détruire," wrote Bakunin, "est en même temps la joie de créer."[2] Nihilism was not a war between classes like socialism, it was the desperate fight of the people against autocracy, the incarnation of arbitrary authority and opposition. Nihilism has often been described as negation; this is only partially true. It was negative, inasmuch as it denied the existing traditional order

[1] Cf. J. de Maistre, *Correspondance*, vol. ii, pp. 287–290.
[2] Cf. J. Bourdeau, *Le Socialisme allemand*, Paris 1892, p. 275.

of things; it was destructive, inasmuch as it tended to make *tabula rasa* of the whole social structure! "Take earth and heaven, take life and death, the soul and God and spit on it, that is Nihilism," said one of its adherents.[1]

But it would be wrong to imagine that the ultimate goal of Nihilism was negation pure and simple. Universal chaos was not the sole purpose of Nihilism, just as wars, which are so destructive, are not fought for the purpose of destroying. A war is always considered by those who fight it as a factor of reconstruction. The Nihilist never preached annihilation, extermination and destruction for their own sakes, but with the sole idea of rebuilding upon the ruins. The Nihilists fought against the existing order of things, the prejudicies and established institutions that have enslaved humanity and stand in the way of any real progress, and so make men suffer. Their aim was deliverance: deliverance of the sufferers from the chains of the past and tradition, chains which the tyrants of all ages and nations had forged. The aims of Russian Nihilism were certainly never selfish, never egotistical; they were always characterised by a spirit of self-effacement, of altruism, of mysticism, which one cannot but admire whatever one may think of the means employed in the endeavour to realise these aims.[2] But then, as I have said, wars, too, destructive in themselves, are fought and justified because they have a constructive purpose, a goal of delivery in view. And after all, in our human society, it is success alone that decides between crime and noble

[1] Cf. Leroy-Beaulieu, *The Empire of the Tsars*.
[2] *Révue des Deux Mondes*, October 15th, 1876.

deed. I think it was Pascal who once said: "Ne pouvant pas forcer la justice, on justifie la force."

In the days of which I am writing the most prominent exponent of Nihilism was Pissarev. According to this writer—at least during the early years of his activity—Nihilism was the expression of a love of life and an effort to shake off *all* shackles, whilst socialism was the manifestation of the discontent of those social groups who were oppressed socially, economically or politically. Nihilism was the expression of the discontent of a social group living under tolerable, economical and material conditions, but sighing beneath the yoke of moral and religious thraldom, of tradition and custom. The tendencies of Socialism and Nihilism, though they were both expressions of discontent—that discontent which, as I have shown, is the primary cause of all revolutions—expressed the discontent of entirely different groups. Social democracy in Russia was wholly concerned with society as a collectivity, with the labouring classes, the people and the proletariat, whilst Nihilism was a more intellectual anarchic tendency; it was, as it were, a moral discontent that had a great deal in common with the individualism of Stirner. Nihilism in Russia certainly paved the way for anarchism, that took the negation of the State as its first and fundamental principle.[1]

Nihilism first made its appearance in 1862, but already, by 1870, it had practically ceased as a separate intellectual current of thought. Practice had proved that the human personality is intimately connected with and dependent upon

[1] Cf. Kulczycki, *l.c.* vol. i, p. 311.

political and social circumstances and conditions. All that remained of the Nihilism of the 'sixties was the intense hatred of external oppression, principally political, and the effort to secure for the human personality a free and natural development. This new phase of thought Nihilism shared with the radical, progressive and revolutionary tendencies of the period. The socialistic current, on the other hand, gradually developed into the revolutionary anarchic doctrine of Bakunin and the semi-anarchic of Lavrov.

Peter Lavrovitsh Lavrov was born at Melekhovo, a village in the government of Pskov, on June 14th, 1823. He was at first educated privately and then entered the Military Academy, or Artillery School, where he obtained the rank of officer in 1842. He taught mathematics from 1844 to 1846. His literary activity began in 1856, and he first attracted attention with his work on the *Philosophy of Hegel.* He contributed to the Russian encyclopædic dictionary of Krajevski, and became its chief editor. In this work he published numerous articles on history, philosophy and religion. The publication of the dictionary was stopped by order of the Government. Lavrov early became an enemy of Tsardom, and Tsardom, in its turn, from the first kept a careful eye on him.

In 1865, Lavrov returned to Russia from a journey abroad with his wife, who was ill. Soon after his return Karakasov fired his famous shot in his attempt to assassinate the Tsar Alexander II, in 1866. Lavrov was amongst the victims upon whom Tsardom vented its wrath. He was exiled to Vologda. Three years later he succeeded in

escaping, thanks to the assistance and self-sacrifice of the famous revolutionary Herman Lopatin. He came to Paris in 1870, and was soon recognised as the leader of the swiftly developing socialist-revolutionary movement. In London, whither he went for a short time, he met Marx and Engels; his acquaintance with these men greatly influenced his mental evolution towards scientific socialism, as the doctrine of Marx has been called. In 1871, Lavrov returned to Paris and was requested by the Russian revolutionary party to found and edit a socialistic review. In 1873, the first number of the revolutionary-socialist review, *Vpered* (*Forwards*), was published. Lavrov died in Paris on February 6th, 1900.

Peter Lavrovitsh was the most scientific of Russian philosophers. He attached little or no importance to the theological or metaphysical speculations of former generations, for the real object of philosophy should be the study of facts, and of the deductions to be made from them. Lavrov therefore devoted his intellectual and moral energy to the philosophy of history and sociology, and to the elaboration of a system of social ethics. One of the principal problems which he endeavoured to solve was that of the personality of the individual. The pivots of Marx's theories are economic evolution and development of the productive forces; the central idea of Lavrov's theories are the progress and development of the individual. Progress, according to his philosophy, consists in the physical, intellectual and moral development of the individual and in his realisation of truth and justice through proper social organisation. Social happi-

ness,' according to Lavrov, is nothing but the happiness of the individuals who compose social groups or nations, and they therefore have a right to modify the existing forms of society. The intellectual *élite*, possessing convictions based upon thought, are the real makers of history; all others, slaves of customs and traditions which they accept without investigation, are beyond the pale of history. They may be as civilised and as intellectual as possible, but as long as they employ their intellectual powers merely in defence of the existing order of things hallowed by tradition, without submitting it to a minute criticism, they are only "civilised savages," or "savages of a superior culture."

Among those who have remained beyond the pale of history, Lavrov counts the governing classes, who obstinately refuse to criticise and to examine; who cling to their privileges, based upon historical traditions. Another group are the poor labourers who, absorbed by their daily work, by their struggle for existence, have neither time nor leisure to think, to criticise, or to examine. They are the *victims* of civilisation, the scapegoats of humanity. It is therefore the duty of the thinking minority to enlighten these victims upon the causes of their sufferings, and thus enable them to take part in the making and shaping of history, and to advance along the road of progress, through the development, at one and the same time, of the individual consciousness and of social solidarity.

In his own words:

"We are approaching an epoch when the realisation of the human ideal will be possible; when the

instinctive tendencies of the individual will be brought to harmonise with the welfare of the collectivity. Only the organisation of men into one harmonious group, united by the interests of collective work and search for justice, can constitute the happiness of the individual."[1]

Men will then be able to overcome the struggle for existence, to conquer the animal world, and, above all, to bring about that domination of critical thought over nature that is the basis of true progress. But, says Lavrov, the solitary intellectual can do but little; he must base himself upon the masses who are working and suffering. Wherever the intellectual minority have remained isolated, civilisation has perished. Witness the civilisations of antiquity, when the masses, kept in slavery, found no interest in, and felt no inclination to uphold, a civilisation the inner meaning of which they ignored. The so-called superman, who creates a gulf between himself and the people, alienates the masses and works out his own perdition. In other words, those intellectuals who are really anxious for the development of the individual and the welfare of the collectivity should come down from their Pisgah heights into the vast plain of common humanity, take the wandering masses by the hand and lead them to the promised land, flowing with milk and honey. A superior civilisation, if it wishes to exist, must be based upon democracy, for without the help of the masses it must perish or fall a victim to some invading race or some military adventurer.

The *Lettres Historiques* above quoted were pub-

[1] *Lettres Historiques.*

lished in 1868, and exercised a profound influence upon the revolutionary movement. They crystallised all that the intellectuals had been vaguely feeling; they gave a clear and definite answer to the question: "What shall we do?" The intellectuals, Lavrov said, have a duty towards the working classes, upon whose shoulders they are resting. They are not themselves producing any material wealth. If, therefore, they proudly and aristocratically keep aloof from the masses, they are not only selfish but are also in a social sense valueless and declare themselves socially insolvent. They can redeem their debt to the masses, who provide them with material comforts, only by going among the people and enlightening them as to their requirements, their eternal rights, and also their strength. The intellectuals should not hesitate to advise democracy to rise and fight against the exploiting classes, and to bring about a new order of things based upon justice.

The established order of society Lavrov declares to be hopelessly immoral. But what is "immoral"? To this question Lavrov gives a clear and definite answer: "All that impedes the progressive development, physical and mental, of the individual." Only a society that is based upon justice, that enables all its members to co-operate for their common happiness and progressive development, that endeavours to lessen, if not to put an end to, human suffering, is moral. Thus Lavrov is at once an individualist and a socialist. His doctrines may be compared to those of Benoit Malon, the father of "Integral Socialism." Lavrov, like Malon, dismissed both Kant's "Duty for



CATHERINE BERESHKOVSKAYA.



PETER LAVROV.



MAXIME GORKY.



PLEKHANOV.

duty's sake" and the motive of self-interest of the materialistic school. He accepted to the full Malon's doctrine, "Altruism will be the basis of our new morality, which will be neither theological, nor metaphysical, but simply social." To sum up, Lavrov demands not mere partial reforms, but a radical change of society, and this change should, if necessary, be brought about by violent means.

Such was the programme Lavrov traced in his theory of the "insolvency of the intellectual classes"; and it was thus he answered the questions which were agitating Russia's intellectuals. Quite a different answer was given by Michel Bakunin to the great question: "What shall we do?" Bakunin was an anarchist, whilst Lavrov was a socialist, *à la* Malon, but still a socialist; hence the divergence of their opinions.

Michel Bakunin was born in 1814. He was the descendant of an old noble family, the scion of boyars, the son of rich landed proprietors. His studies finished, he entered the School of Artillery at Petrograd. He passed his examinations, and his rank and fortune should have opened all doors to him and given him a brilliant future, but he quarrelled with his father and soon found himself exiled to a small garrison town in an obscure corner of the Empire. Here he passed the best years of his youth, and grew pessimistic and bitter. When about twenty-two years old he left the army and went to Moscow, where he joined one of the clubs, or circles, whose members devoted themselves to discussions of Hegelian philosophy. The idle, rich Stankevitsh propagated the ideas of

the German philosopher. The "essence of the absolute Spirit" was one of the favourite subjects of discussion.

In 1841, Bakunin left Moscow and went to Berlin, where he hoped to be more thoroughly initiated into the mysteries of Hegelianism. It may be said that Hegel's philosophy owed much of its success to its obscure phraseology. The students of his system had to grope in the dark for his meaning, with the inevitable result that each found what suited him best, the meaning that was most congenial to his personality and needs. It was a spiritual food similar to the manna of the Hebrews in the desert which, according to a saying in the Talmud, had the taste of the favourite food of each eater. That is the secret of the success of many an obscure and contradictory doctrine; it can suit all tastes and palates. A new doctrine, which is clear, logical and free of mysticism and contradictions, rarely appeals to the vast majority. Where certain students discovered proofs of atheism in Hegel's philosophy, others found the principles of faith. Hegel was variously declared to be the most conservative of conservatives, the upholder of the idea of State and Church, and the most revolutionary of revolutionaries. It merely depended upon the reader. However, as a matter of fact, an entire revolutionary school was founded upon Hegel's philosophy.[1] His disciples deciphered the cryptic style of their master as if it were a sacred text, the Bible of the revolution.

Bakunin was much attracted by Hegel's phil-

[1] Cf. Funck-Brentano, *Les Sophistes allemands et les Nihilistes Russes*, Paris, 1887.

osophy, which, though based upon the principle of liberty, nevertheless relegated it to the domain of the spirit. In practice, Hegel sacrificed the individual to the State, since he recognised the omnipotence of the latter. His philosophy was nothing less than an apology for absolutism and autocracy as they existed in Russia, and in Hegelianism Bakunin found some justification for the autocratic government of Nicholas I. It is interesting to note, in passing, that even the most revolutionary doctrines promulgated by Germans are not free from a certain homage to power. Bakunin had been a member of the "Northern League" which brought about the Revolution of the Decembrists, but at that time he was not sufficiently interested in the movement to take a prominent part in it, and therefore escaped the "tragic but glorious fate" of the majority of his companions. Yet by nature and temperament Bakunin was not a dreamer; he was avid for action. Whilst studying the philosophy of Hegel, he also devoted himself to the doctrine of Proudhon. He finally became a revolutionary philosopher ready to play the part of an "architect of ruins."

He left Germany in 1843 and proceeded to Paris, which was just then seething with socialistic fermentations, with the ideas of Cabet and the teachings of Louis Blanc. The revolution of 1848 gave Bakunin ample scope for his ideas and doctrines, for his eager activity and superabundant energy. In 1848 he was a pan-Slavist, and was therefore hostile to pan-Germanism, yet during the insurrection of 1849 he played an important rôle among the insurgents at Dresden

against the Prussian and Saxon troops. He was arrested at Chemnitz on May 10th, and condemned to death, but his sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment. Then Russia claimed him, and sent him to Siberia. After some two years of exile he escaped and managed to reach London by way of Japan and America. Bakunin's liberty-loving soul—that soul that slumbers in every Russian—was now fully awake; he abandoned orthodox Hegelianism and joined the new philosophic school known as the "Left Hegelians," which criticised the political absolutism and religious idealism of the master.

The leaders of the new school were Strauss, Feuerbach and Bruno Bauer. Bakunin's intellectual world was henceforth dominated by the principle of liberty. Hegel had taught him to seek liberty in the land of shadows, in the realms of the spirit, in metaphysical worlds, but now Bakunin refused to accept dreams for realities.

"They are only pale reproductions and monstrous exaggerations of the real world, which we are inclined to treat with such contempt. We have at last learned to understand that soaring into the more lofty regions of the spirit, we did not grow richer but poorer, both in heart and spirit; not more powerful, but more powerless. We have at last understood that when we amused ourselves, like children, by peopling the vast void with our dreams, we abandoned the real world and our entire existence to false prophets, tyrants and exploiters of all kinds, religious, political and economic. By searching for ideal liberty beyond this real world, we were condemning

ourselves to the saddest and most shameful slavery." [1]

Bakunin was persuaded that there was no other world than this real one, and that all transcendental conceptions were inanities; he was convinced that humanity could attain to perfect happiness in this world—the real—if it emancipated itself from all authority, and he believed it to be his duty to help humanity, as far as it lay in his power, to realise such an emancipation.

Being a materialist, Bakunin considered man to be merely an animal that has reached a higher stage of development; thought in itself is only a material product of the brain; man is distinguished from the lower animals by his faculty of thought and his sociability. Thanks to these two qualities man is superior to all other animals inhabiting our planet, among whom alone he has a future. "Sociability and human solidarity" constitute the primordial causes of human progress. Jean Jacques Rousseau was therefore wrong when he maintained that man, who is perfectly free when he is isolated, has to sacrifice a portion of his freedom as soon as he joins his fellow men.

"Man," stated Bakunin, "is born a brute and a slave. It is only in contact with his fellow men, in the midst of the collectivity, that he has been able gradually to humanise and emancipate himself, to acquire the faculties of thought, speech and will-power. He would never have developed them had he lived in isolation. Man, therefore, has only reached his present degree of development

[1] M. Nettlau, *The Life of Bakunin*, London, 1896–99, p. 37.

thanks to the collective efforts of all members of society, past and present."

The destiny of men, therefore, is to live socially, to help one another and to conquer nature. Such a goal can only be reached after a long historical evolution. The final goal of humanity will be, on the one hand, obedience to the laws of nature, not because they have been imposed upon it by external will, divine or human, by a collectivity or by an individual, but because those laws are innate in humanity; and, on the other hand, the emancipation of the individual from all authority which to-day his fellow men are anxious to compel him to submit to. These are the essential conditions of liberty to which man can only attain at the *end* of his evolution, and therein lies the whole future of humanity. "The true, great, supreme goal of history is the real, complete emancipation of every individual." The past and its traditions must therefore be entirely abandoned, for progress implies the gradual dismissal and discarding of the errors of the past. "Our animality lies behind us, our humanity, which alone can lend us light and warmth, is before us. We must never look behind us—always ahead. If ever we look back into the past, it should be for the purpose merely of realising what we have been and what we should never be again."

Bakunin criticised sharply and mercilessly both the bourgeois State and bourgeois society. He proved that in the struggle between the working classes and the bourgeoisie, the State would always and inevitably become an instrument of oppression. He thus arrived at conclusions diametrically opposed to those of the socialists, and

even of Lavrov, who has been called above an integral socialist. Whilst Lavrov advocated propaganda by the élite, and a preparation of the masses for the future revolution and for the new State, Bakunin called upon the oppressed, all over the world, to shake off the yoke of authority, to hurl down from their pedestals the two idols man had made himself—the State and bourgeois society. "This destruction," he maintained, "is the holy, absolutely necessary process, without which no social revolution is possible; it would be not only destructive but also constructive, as it would call new worlds into being." The new world would be "a confraternity of men" without distinction of language, nationality or race.

Bakunin's thirst for liberty, his abhorrence of slavery, of thraldom, of shackles, made him attack every authority in the world, divine or human. To him, man's belief in God was one of the chief causes of man's slavery; therefore he condemned that belief as one of the most false and pernicious ideas which had ever estranged man from his natural destiny. He considered that man had created God in his own image and had then imagined himself to be the creature of this creation—God—of his own brain! And what was the result? Man had thus inaugurated an era of obscurity, unhappiness and slavery for his species, had developed principles, theories and doctrines, all chains to bind him and stand in the way of his emancipation and true freedom. "L'existence de Dieu implique l'abdication de la raison et de la justice humaines, elle est la négation de l'humaine liberté et aboutit nécéssairement à un esclavage

non seulement théorique mais pratique." [1] According to religion, God is truth, justice and life eternal, therefore man must be falsehood, iniquity and death. If God be the master, man must be the slave; again, if man be the slave of God, then he must also be the slave of the Church and of the State.

To Bakunin this deduction was the only logical one. It is one that Catholicism has understood better than all other religions, and it is therefore that the Catholic Church stands for religion absolute. Bakunin attacked Catholicism fiercely; it is the religion that more than any other upholds and sanctifies the principle of State and authority. "Dieu est," he exclaims, "donc l'homme est esclave. L'homme est intelligent, juste, libre, donc Dieu n'existe pas." [2] He considered that religion implied intellectual subjection, and that intelligent subjection must inevitably lead to political and social slavery. "*Réligion*, and even deistic metaphysics, which is only theology in disguise, is the most formidable obstacle in the way of true emancipation of society. And that is the reason why all governments, and all European statesmen who are not metaphysicians, theologians or deists, and who, in their heart of hearts, believe *ni à Dieu ni au diable*, so passionately protect metaphysics and religion, no matter which religion, so long as it teaches patience, resignation and submission." [3]

It was religion that enabled the conquerors in the struggle for life to proclaim that they had been

[1] *Fédéralisme, Socialisme, et Antithéologisme*, Paris, 1895 (Bakounine, *Œuvres*, p. 64).
[2] *l.c.* p. 64. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

specially designated by Providence to rule and govern over other men; and these others have now grown convinced that if they revolted against the existing order of things, they would gravely offend Divinity. They have grown to believe that it is their duty to cringe and to submit to the dictates of the delegates of the Divinity. "Toute autorité temporelle ou humaine procède directement de l'autorité spirituelle ou divine." [1] In other words, the governing classes, the conquerors in the struggle for life, by basing their momentary victory, their authority, upon divine right, by appealing to the approbation of Divinity and thus sanctioning their victory, have compelled the vanquished to resign themselves to eternal slavery. And even when the vanquished feel that they have grown stronger, that they could now attempt a new battle and, in their turn, gain the victory, they are assured that they have no right to declare war, for it would be a grave offence against Divinity. And thus the astute victors are allowed to remain in undisturbed possession of the fruits of their usurpation. The divine principle therefore, the belief in God, is the basis of all authority —and authority is the negation of liberty. The divine principle implies unquestioning, unreasoning submission to the two institutions: Church and State, and all their representatives, high and low; so Bakunin stated. "Il est évident que tant que nous aurons un maître au ciel nous serons esclaves sur la terre." [2]

Having thoroughly criticised the idea of God, Bakunin next attacked the idea of State, which in

[1] *Dieu et l'Etat*, *ibid.*, p. 283.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 282.

itself is one of the principal obstacles to the liberation of humanity, and impedes the realisation of its destiny. The State can only guarantee and maintain what it finds ready: wealth on the one hand and poverty on the other—the *status quo*. The State, too, perpetually fosters rivalry and discord among men. "After all, the supreme law of the State is merely a conservation of the State; all States, since their inception, have been the cause of strife and war; rivalry between the State and its own subjects, and war between the different States, since one nation could only be strong and powerful if its neighbours were weak. The State is therefore the cause of continual wars, internal and external, and thus, by its very existence, is "the most flagrant, the most complete and cynical negation of humanity." [1]

The State never recognises human right, humanity and civilisation except within its own boundaries. It has its own special morality: this is called *Raison d'Etat*. Everything that serves the greatness, preservation and power of the State is right, however wrong, and even revolting, it may be from the point of view of human morality. On the contrary, the most holy and humanely just thing is wrong if it does not further the interests of the State.[2]

International law does not exist, and never could exist, in a serious and true manner, without at the same time undermining the very foundations of the principle of State.[3]

"In order to make liberty, justice and peace

[1] *Dieu et l'Etat*, p. 150.
[2] Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 149, 150.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 151.

triumph in Europe, in order to make civil war impossible among the various peoples who constitute the European family, there is only one way, and that is the constitution of a 'United States of Europe.'" But was Bakunin's ideal at all similar to that promulgated to-day by our democrats who talk of a League of Nations, of a United States of Europe? Not at all. A formation of a United States of Europe by the States as they are at present constituted would, considering the respective powers of the different States, be a monstrous inequality. "Therefore," said Bakunin, "all the lovers of liberty should first set their respective fatherlands in order, pull down the old order of things, all based and established upon the principles of violence and authority, and replace it by a new organisation whose only basis would be the interests, requirements and natural attractions of the populations and the free association of individuals into communities, of communities into provinces, of provinces into nations, and of nations into a United States of Europe. Consequently, the historic rights of States must be abandoned, all questions relating to frontiers, natural, political, strategical or commercial, must be dropped and considered as a part of ancient history.[1]

In comparison with the other adherents of Internationalism, Bakunin was very far advanced. Mazzini, for instance, was always a decided adversary of the autonomy of provinces. "Democracy without liberty," wrote Bakunin, "cannot serve us as a banner." Modern Cæsarism, with all its hideous consequences, suspended over European

[1] *Dieu et l'Etat*, pp. 16, 17.

humanity like a terrible menace and nightmare, also calls itself democratic. And the Moscow and St. Petersburg Imperialism, this ideal of all military and bureaucratic States, has it not crushed Poland in the very name of democracy? But it is not sufficient to overthrow the monarchic system in order to emancipate the nations and endow them with the gifts of justice and peace. On the contrary, we are convinced that even a great military Republic, bureaucratic and politically centralised, would necessarily become a conquering power, oppressive in the interior. France, though constituted as a democratic Republic, nevertheless favoured a policy of expansion and conquest. "It is strange," he added, "that the great Revolution which, for the first time in history, proclaimed the liberty not only of the citizen but of man in general, became the inheritor of the monarchic principle which it had abolished, by resuscitating the very negation of liberty, namely, centralisation and omnipotence of the State." Thus, according to Bakunin, the French Revolution, which, at first, had been inspired by sentiments of love and liberty, committed moral suicide when it endeavoured to reconcile these principles with centralisation of State; then, it only gave birth to military dictatorship and Cæsarism. In order to give peace and liberty to Europe, the centralisation of military and bureaucratic States, whether autocratic, constitutionally monarchic or even republican, should be abolished, and the great principle of Federalism be made triumphant.

To sum up: Bakunin believed that the principal result of the coming social and political revolu-

tion would be the perfect liberty of man. Any individual belonging to any group or association of labour would have the power and freedom to detach himself from it and join another. The communes thus constituted would enjoy complete autonomy, and would be able to form relationships between themselves in conformity with their common interests.

Though the majority of revolutionary agitators have been strong nationalists—for instance, Lassalle, a German; Mazzini, an Italian; Blanqui, a Frenchman—Bakunin, although he never ceased to be a Russian, was at the service of humanity as a whole. For him, nations and races were but fleeting waves in the vast ocean of humanity. His ideal was a brotherhood: "a confraternity of men" instead of a "league of nations." In this respect, however, he was thoroughly Russian. "We Russians," wrote Dostoevski, "have at least two countries—*patries*—Russia and Europe. Our mission should be universally human. Our efforts should be consecrated to the service, not of Russia alone, or even of the whole Slavonic world, but to the service of humanity at large."

Here one notices the differences that existed between Marx and Bakunin. The former was a cold intellectual, the latter a sentimentalist and an idealist, despite his realistic conception of the world. Marx had a deep sense of justice, but no instinct of liberty, whilst Bakunin's soul thirsted for liberty. Both temperament and nationality account for much. Marx, although of Jewish descent, was thoroughly Germanised; Bakunin was a Slav. The distinctive traits in their charac-

ters are not the effect of their respective theories, but rather the cause of the latter. If we search the pages of history of human thought and action, we invariably find that those who have, or are supposed to have, worked in the service of a collectivity, have been merely intellectual machines, and have rarely, if ever, been moved by the suffering of the individual. We find that statesmen, politicians, economists, philosophers and religious teachers who, in the course of history, have evolved theories and plans to bring happiness, spiritual or material, to a race, a nation or a class, to a collectivity of individuals, have always been guided by intellect, rarely by love. To love potential generations *at the expense* of the individual, feeling and suffering before our very eyes, is not love. The *leitmotif* of the benefactors of future generations, of masses unknown to them, may be inspired by a lofty purpose; but the honest psychologist will not fail to discover in it some ingredients of ambition, self-interest, or fanaticism.

The love dwelling in the human heart is, after all, only finite, therefore, if it is to be bestowed upon millions, especially potential millions, the fraction obtainable by the single individual will be infinitesimal. The really golden hearts—true, altruistic, unselfish emotions and unreasoning love—are only to be found among the benefactors of individuals; among those who devote themselves to a limited number, those who work in the silence of obscurity, not in the glare of publicity or history. Such a modest, real love is never the appanage of the would-be saviour of a class, of a race, a nation, or any other collectivity. All such

benefactors, be they labelled Socialists, Nationalists, Pan-Germans, Pan-Slavs, Zionists *et tutti quanti*, who dream of the welfare and happiness of millions, though cold and indifferent to the sufferings of individuals, are not altruists, sentimentalists or idealists, they are merely dry-as-dust intellectuals, if they be not egoists. To love the parts constituting the whole is within human possibility, but to love the whole whilst despising the parts makes such a love, if love it can be called, a mere emptiness. The soldier fighting in the trenches and dying on the battlefield is doing so because he loves his home and hearth, his wife or sister, his mother or his children, not the potential children of future generations. Men have also died, and are dying, for an idea; but this is because that idea has become a part of their very being, their precious spiritual inheritance or possession.

Bakunin and Marx, the Slav and the Teuton, clearly illustrate the above statements. The former, endowed with the simplicity of a child, was animated by a real, unbounded love for the individual; the latter, a would-be benefactor of a class, was an intellectual machine of the finest type: "a scientific demagogue," "the incarnation of a democratic dictator," as Bakunin rightly said.[1] Space does not permit the elaboration of these points, but an impartial study of the psychology of races and nations shows that it was Germany who inoculated the world with the virus both of love and hatred of collectivity. Germany is the home of such movements as

[1] Préaudeau, *Bakunine et l'Internationale*, Paris, 1911, p. 37.

"Scientific Socialism," the "Internationale," "Antisemitism," and many other "philisms" and "phobisms."

Even in their plans for the realisation of the social revolution, Marx and Bakunin counted upon different elements. The German looked to those who were sufficiently educated to understand the scientific bases of his system, whilst the Russian appealed to those who craved most for liberty. Marx believed that the nation that would first give the signal for the social revolution would be the State that was farthest advanced—Germany, for instance. (He seems, however, to have changed his views altogether after his sojourn in England.) Bakunin, on the contrary, was of opinion that the nation most richly endowed with the spirit of revolt and the instinct of liberty would be the first to give the signal. He did not believe that the Teutonic races possessed this instinct of liberty, they are so essentially authoritative; but it was fully developed in the Latin and Slavonic races.

This belief explains why Bakunin took sides with France during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. He addressed a passionate appeal to the members of the "Internationale," especially to the Swiss, calling upon them to take up arms and to intervene in favour of the French Republic which had just been proclaimed. France represented liberty in Europe, whilst "Germany was the common enemy of all European socialists," for she "incarnated despotism and reaction." Bakunin, the champion of liberty, to whom, paradoxical as it may sound of this atheist, he had erected a shrine, hated Germany as much as he

loved France. "Ce Russe," wrote A. Richard, "cet anarchiste, cet ennémi des patries . . . connaissait bien l'histoire de l'esprit français, le génie de la Révolution Française. Il aimait la France, et bien plus, il épousait les haines de la France, et souffrait de son abaissement." [1] But what was it that interested Bakunin in France? Certainly not her political power, not the State. It was neither Imperial nor Royalist France, not even Republican France, that he cared for; it was the great national character, the French spirit, the generous and heroic instincts, the revolutionary audacity that had dared to pull down all the authorities sanctioned and fortified by history, all the old gods and idols. It was this French iconoclasm, so vastly different to the Teuton vandalism, that Bakunin so greatly admired.

"If we were to lose" (he wrote) "this great historical nation which is called France, if it were to disappear from the arena of the world, or, what is still worse, were now to be dragged down into the mud to live as the slave of Bismarck, the world would be the poorer and a great void would ensue; it would be more than a national catastrophe, it would be a misfortune, a universal debacle."

For then, the German State, authoritative and reactionary *par excellence*, would make Europe feel its power, and crush liberty wherever it raised its head. The German people have no instinct of liberty. They even found means to transform the "Internationale" into a Sozial-democratie! Therefore it was the sacred duty of every man

[1] *Révue de Paris*, 1896, Séptembre-Octobre, p. 148.

who loved liberty and was anxious to see humanity triumph over brutality, of every man who cared for the emancipation of his own country, to come forward and take part in the struggle of democracy against German despotism.

CHAPTER IX

PEACEFUL PROPAGANDA

As we have seen, even during the despotic reign of Nicholas I, the socialistic ideas of Western Europe had found their way into Russia. With the accession of Alexander II, when the Press was given a little more freedom, many foreign works were translated into Russian, and thus were more readily accessible to the people. The authors mostly *en vogue* were Spencer, Darwin, Mill, Buckle, Fourier and St. Simon. The ideas and theories elaborated by these authors were the starting points for Russian writers and publicists.[1] The revolutionary groups included not only the nobility and officers, but officials and students belonging to the bourgeoisie and the lower strata of society; they were men who hated the existing order of things with their intelligence and with their hearts. They hated autocracy, not only intellectually and æsthetically, but instinctively, as a slave hates oppression and thirsts for freedom; their instinct told them to hate the one and to love the other. Any human emotion that is dictated by cold intellect is at its best only artificial.

The true emotions are those dictated by instinct

[1] Kulcyzki, vol. i, p. 294.

and impulse. Thus the new intellectuals of Russia, who belonged to the middle classes, hated autocracy, not only with their intellects, but also with their hearts. The result was that they did not only discuss, plan, theorise, criticise and philosophise, but they also began to prepare for action. They stood nearer the masses than the aristocrats of 1825 had done; they relied not only upon their own power and energy, but also upon the people. The most prominent leaders of the social and political movement of those days were Tshernyshevski, and later, Lavrov and Bakunin. Tshernyshevski's ideas of socialism and his plans for the solution of the agrarian question were the starting point of all revolutionary programmes of the 'sixties onwards.

The Russian intellectuals now earnestly devoted themselves to gaining support from the people, who alone were truly able to bring about an upheaval in Russia. They endeavoured clearly to formulate their demands, to express their political tendencies and desires in proclamations, to predict the revolution, and even to urge it. The spirit of revolt was at last entering the realm of reality. M. J. Mikhailov published his proclamation addressed to the young generation in 1861,[1] and for this crime he was condemned to six years' penal servitude. The proclamation was followed by the first number of the revolutionary periodical *Velikoruss*, or "The Great Russian." Openly and in passionate language the revolution was preached; the writers addressing themselves to the peasants and to the intellectuals. The abolition of autocracy and the solution of the agrarian

[1] Cf. Byloe, 1906, i, pp. 101–132.

question were clearly formulated demands, and numerous agitators, with a superb contempt for danger, prison, exile or death, busily devoted themselves to the spreading far and wide of their revolutionary propaganda, while Colonel Kranovski and Lieutenant Grigoriev incited the soldiers against the Government and the Tsar.[1]

The Universities became a very hotbed of revolutionary propaganda. With the enthusiasm and impulsiveness of youth the Russian students threw themselves into the revolutionary movement. In 1862 a new revolutionary organisation was founded; it was known as the League of "Land and Freedom," "Zemlya i Volya." Its activity consisted principally in spreading revolutionary ideas among the intellectuals, and its members were recruited mostly from the various groups of officers, lawyers, civil engineers, medical practitioners, officials, teachers, littérateurs and students. The demands and aims of the organisation were: political freedom, transformation of Russia into a federal state and the partition of the land among the peasants.[2] These demands, however, made any union between the various social groups almost an impossibility. The nobles could not agree with the advanced revolutionaries, who believed that the discontent of the peasants should be stimulated and used to bring about a revolution.

On the other hand, the industrial and mercantile bourgeoisie were too ignorant and too suspicious to understand and appreciate the plans and aspirations of the intellectuals. Both the urban and

[1] Basilevski, *Political Crimes in Russia during the Nineteenth Century*, i, p. 117.
[2] Panteleev, pp. 255–266.

rural populations were vaguely discontented, but their discontent was chiefly directed against the seigneurs, landowners or mighty capitalists, not against the Government, autocracy or the Tsar. As a matter of fact, the so-called bourgeoisie was greatly attached to and had real confidence in the Tsar and the Central Government, and hoped for the best. It must also be borne in mind that the emancipation of the serfs and the subsequent abuses were questions that but little concerned the merchants and industrial classes. They harboured none of the grievances of the aristocracy who had been deprived of their privileges, nor of the peasants who had been disappointed in their expectations.

Thus the revolutionary movement was limited to the intellectuals, and even they were not united into one well-organised body. On the one hand, the Government was a strict watch-dog, so the danger was great; and on the other hand, the members were mostly dreamers, theoreticians, not experts or artisans capable of bringing about a revolution. Besides, their scattered groups lacked one recognised leader. The only man whom every one would have accepted as a leader was Tshernyshevski, but he had decided to be as careful as was possible.

One of the most prominent leaders of the organisation Zemlya i Volya was Nicholas Serno-Solovyevitsh; he elaborated a plan for a Russian Constitution. Zemlya i Volya was not socialistic, although many socialists were among its members. Russia was not yet ripe for true socialistic organisations; indeed, it is doubtful if she is even now. It must not be forgotten that in the early 'sixties the

factory and working men, the proletariat, was not at all developed; the peasants cannot be styled proletariat; and, in any case, their psychology differs greatly from that of the working men.[1] However, the Zemlya i Voyla, in the course of time, would have managed to spread the revolutionary movement ideas, not only among all the scattered groups and individuals of the intelligenzia, but also among the peasants and working men, and so unite the warring elements and direct them into one channel, and thus centralise the various streams of discontent prevailing in the Empire of the Tsar.

But, unfortunately, different circumstances frustrated the realisation of these hopes. The Government and the police were informed of the existence of the organisation in June 1862. The third section of the Imperial Chancellery, the political police, arrested a certain Paul Victoshin, who was returning to Russia from a visit to London. Many compromising documents, including letters from Herzen to various revolutionary leaders in Russia, were found among his possessions. Among the names mentioned in the correspondence was that of Tshernyshevski, who was just then on the point of leaving the capital for his native town Saratov, whither he had already sent his family. On July 7th, 1862, Tshernyshevski was arrested and sent to the fortress of Petropavlovsk. Shortly before his arrest, an adjutant of Prince Suvarov, the Governor-General of St. Petersburg, called upon him and advised him to go abroad, as otherwise he would be imprisoned. But Tshernyshevski refused to take the hint. On the one hand, he was too deeply attached to the work he had taken up,

[1] Kulczycki, i, p. 372.

and on the other, he felt quite sure that the Government could find nothing against him, he had always been so careful and prudent.

Both Tshernyshevski and Serno-Solovyevitsh were arrested on July 7th, 1862. The arrest of Tshernyshevski was a terrible blow to the revolutionary movement, and the efforts of "Land and Freedom" to unite and concentrate all the revolutionary forces in Russia were henceforth almost futile. There was no leader powerful enough to command respect and strong enough to gather all the threads into his hands. There was no one among all the revolutionary intellectuals who could equal Tshernyshevski in political insight, social understanding, erudition and, above all, personal influence. Some of the members, among them Pantaleev, reorganised the committee of "Land and Freedom" and endeavoured to continue their propaganda among the students and officers, but it cannot be said that it proved very effective.

In the meantime an event happened that for a time at least put a stop to the revolutionary movement in Russia. This was the Polish Revolution of 1863–64. The insurrection of the Poles, which the Russian autocracy quelled with all the cruelty and bloodshed of which it was capable, became the signal of a reactionary era. The Polish Revolution provided the Government with an excuse for many reactionary measures. But no persecution could now put an effectual stop to the revolutionary movement in Russia. It spread, slowly but gradually, among the intellectuals and students. In order to escape the cruel persecutions of Tsardom, numbers of the intellectuals went abroad,

especially to Switzerland, where the Russian revolutionary agitators found a new stimulus in the work and influence of the Western socialist movement and literature. At home, in Russia, it was a terrible struggle between Tsardom and the spirit of revolt.

Yet, though the Government of the Tsar was bitterly severe against all revolutionary efforts, and sent to prison, or Siberia, all those whom it found guilty of revolutionary ideas or propaganda, it introduced a number of minor reforms. These chiefly affected the judicial, financial and military administrations; an effort was also made to establish local self-government in the districts and provinces, known as the Ziemstvos. The object of these reforms was to show Russia and Europe that the Tsar was really inclined to be liberal, and that if he were severe towards the Poles and the revolutionaries, it was with a bleeding heart that he punished his beloved children. The Government had decided to show Russia that it was neither reactionary nor weak; that the Tsar was the real father of his subjects and knew what they needed. He was solicitous for their welfare and well-being, and had decided to grant all the necessary reforms. But though he gave with the one hand, he would not hesitate to punish with the other.

The liberal measures were more fatal to the development of the revolutionary movement in Russia than the punishments of prison and exile. The reforms continued from 1863 until 1870; it was a period of struggle for the revolutionaries, who had come to understand that autocracy would always crush with her left hand whatever semblance

of liberty she gave with her right. They had given up all hope of ever receiving anything from Tsardom or Autocracy. "Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes." But society was satisfied with the reforms and sang the praises of the Tsar. Thus, Alexander's liberalism was more fatal to the spirit of revolution than Nicholas' open, reactionary and autocratic attitude had been. It is the old story of the traveller, the sun and the wind.

I have already said that there was no leader who could unite the scattered forces of revolution. Herzen was abroad, and his influence at home was on the wane. Bakunin, at that time, was a cosmopolitan revolutionary, and paid but little attention to events in his own country. Tshernyshevski was in prison. The Government knew well how dangerous Tshernyshevski was, and determined to get rid of him. There were no proofs against him, but that was a trifling matter. Forged incriminating documents were produced, false witnesses appeared, and, in spite of Tshernyshevski's clever defence and his declaration that the documents were forged and the witnesses false, the Senate condemned him to fourteen years' penal servitude, to loss of all his civil rights and perpetual exile to Siberia. Alexander reduced the fourteen years to seven years' penal servitude. It was while he was in prison that Tshernyshevski wrote his famous novel, *Tshto Dyelatj* (*What Shall We Do?*)

The revolutionary ferment continued, and it was about this time that, by the side of socialistic tendencies, the new current of revolt known as Nihilism developed. In 1865 a small organisation was formed at Moscow with the object of spreading socialist propaganda. This propaganda was to

be spread among the rural population, to convince them that the land was the rightful property of the people. The members of the group had decided to incite the peasants against the landowners and the authorities. They also intended to found schools, libraries, co-operative factories, etc., so as to get in closer touch with the people.[1] But, as usual, the members greatly differed as to the means to be employed. Some, like Matinin and his friends (known as the Matinintsi) and Sobello and his friends (known as the Saratovtsi), were in favour of spreading propaganda among the people; thus they hoped to bring about a revolution.

Others, known as the Ipatovstsi, and among whom were Ishutin and Karakasov, were for bolder and more energetic methods: they desired the assassination of the Tsar. Ishutin went to St. Petersburg and decided to form out of a few of his most intimate friends a new group to be known as "The Hell," whose aim should be to undertake the immediate and direct fight against the Government, employing terrorist methods. One of Ishutin's followers was Karakasov, a young man of twenty-five. He decided to kill Alexander in spite of the protests of his comrades, who believed that the propitious moment had not yet arrived for such drastic methods. Karakasov was a member of a noble family and had, as a student, been expelled from the University. Being both impulsive and obstinate, he ignored the advice of his comrades, and on April 4th, 1866, he fired at Alexander in the Summer Garden, but

[1] Cf. Basilevski, vol. i, pp. 138–141; Byloe, 1906, iv, pp. 290–296.

missed the Tsar, because a peasant, named Komissarovo, caught his arm as he raised it to fire.

The shot fired by Karakasov was the signal for new reactionary measures; indeed, it was a turning point in Russia's internal policy. The Government now became openly reactionary, whilst Russian society loudly manifested its loyalty. Fear is a wonderful stimulus of patriotism and loyalty. Arrests followed *en masse*; the revolutionaries were tried and sentenced by the famous Mouraviev, who had quelled the Polish Revolution in 1863, had distinguished himself by his cruelties in Lithuania, and who was known as the butcher of Vilna.[1] The government now declared that the revolutionary movement was a menace to right, property and religion, and that the liberal intentions of the Tsar had been misunderstood and misinterpreted. Henceforth, the Government, relying upon the aristocracy and the conservative elements of the State, would take energetic and severe measures against all revolutionary tendencies.

It kept its word. Basilevski relates (v, p. 88) that Karakasov appealed to the Tsar and asked him to commute his death sentence. The reply was, that as a man the Tsar pardoned the prisoner, but as a ruler it was impossible that he should commute the death sentence. Karakasov was accordingly hanged on September 3rd, 1866. Ishutin was also condemned to death, and he too appealed to the Tsar. The prisoner was already upon the scaffold and the executioners were ready with the rope when the Imperial answer in the affirmative arrived. When one reflects upon the

[1] Cf. Basilevski, i, p. 250.

refined cruelty and torture of this incident, and remembers that Alexander II was the most liberal and generous of all the Romanovs, any spark of pity for Nicholas II dies in one's breast. Thus, from 1866 reaction was once more in full swing in Russia, and the revolutionary movement, though continuing to live, went through a period of comparative calm.

But the spirit of revolt was still in existence, even though its wings had been clipped. The spark of revolution still glimmered under the ashes, and it only required a stimulus to fan it into flame. Two circumstances were especially calculated to favour the renascence of the revolutionary movement: the great spread of Western European socialism and the large increase in emigration. Western European socialism flourished during the years 1863–71. Lassalle founded his workmen's associations and Marx the "Internationale," and social democracy was in full swing in Germany. The Paris Commune caused quite a stir in Russia. All these socialistic ideas, in perhaps a vague and mystic form, filtered through into Russia and permeated the strata of Russia's youth, affecting also, to some extent, the peasantry and the proletariat. The vivifying breath of democracy and revolutionary movements in Western Europe could not but lend new vigour to Russia's enthusiasts, dreamers, reformers and revolutionists. A new generation grew up—a generation that felt that the time for deeds had arrived. It thirsted for action, for facts, for the creative deed that would replace the word.

But although every one felt that something ought to be done, no one knew what to do, and there

was no one who could tell them. Great numbers of the women students, intellectuals to whom the Government refused admission to the Universities, went abroad in large quantities, but the revolutionary movement was still fed by them. The "Internationale," founded by Marx, exercised a deep moral influence upon the enthusiastic Slavs. They saw in it a concentration of all the social forces of the world, an attempt to resuscitate humanity to new life, the renascence of the suffering classes. They hoped and believed that the "Internationale" would find new means and ways, and would teach them to carry the revolutionary movement to a successful issue in their own country.[1] As yet, however, the revolutionary elements lacked a definite programme, an answer to the question: What is to be done?

The discontent with the reactionary Government increased steadily among the students at the Russian Universities, especially at the capital. At first, the unrest among the students was more of a local, private character; they were demanding certain privileges. But the revolutionary elements, still existing though scattered, decided to utilise the growing discontent of the students, whose demands were refused by the authorities, and turn it into a political channel.

Sergei Nietshaev, professor at a school in the capital, was especially active in fanning the sparks of revolt among the students into a steady flame. He left the capital in 1869 and went to Geneva, where he met Bakunin, who introduced him into the association of the "Internationale." Nietshaev was an energetic agitator; he was a fanatic

[1] Cf. Kulczyki, vol. i, p. 474.

and a man with an iron will, but exceedingly ambitious. How often has ambition been the cause, not only of the birth, but also of the death of popular movements! Nietshaev persuaded Herzen to hand over to him the charge of the secret revolutionary fund, a sum of about £1,000. Everything was ready in Russia, Nietshaev pretended, for a revolution. Bakunin then entrusted him with the organisation of the Russian branch of the Internationale. On his return to Russia, Nietshaev founded a secret society whose goal was the liberation of the people from social misery. This organisation was supposed to be ruled by a secret committee, which in reality did not exist, and Nietshaev was their representative. He persuaded his comrades that Russia was honeycombed with secret and revolutionary societies.[1]

But if Nietshaev was ambitious, so also was one of his comrades, a certain Ivanov. The two had a quarrel, and Nietshaev, true to his motto, "The end sanctifies the means"—which he had borrowed from Ignatius Loyola—made up his mind to get rid of Ivanov. He therefore persuaded four of his colleagues that Ivanov was a dangerous man and must be removed, or the organisation would suffer. The result was that Ivanov was assassinated, the victim of fanaticism and ambition, on November 21st, 1869. But this deed proved the undoing of the organisation; it was discovered, and eighty-seven members were arrested. Nietshaev managed to escape to Switzerland, but was extradited in 1872 as a common criminal and condemned to twenty years' penal servitude.

[1] Cf. Basilekvsi, i, pp. 163, 167, 183.

The Government saw an opportunity in the affair to discredit the whole revolutionary movement, and so decided to make the trial public. But it defeated its own ends; society condemned the tactics of Nietshaev, but it could not help approving and applauding his theories. We may dislike the men who are at the head of a movement and yet appreciate the ideas underlying it. The trial of the accused proved an excellent propaganda for the spirit of revolt, for it expounded eloquently the theories of the revolutionaries and spread those very ideas that the Government was so anxious to suppress. All the accused held themselves bravely before their judges and gained the whole-hearted sympathy of their audience, who could not but look upon them as martyrs in a great and sacred cause. The students were especially struck by the dignified conduct and noble purpose of the accused. They condemned Nietshaev the man, but they admired his ideas. The thirst for deeds became greater, and the revolutionary tendencies dormant in many a mind suddenly awoke.[1]

The Universities and Colleges then became the chief homesteads of revolt. The intellectuals and students saw in the old traditions of the Russian *Mir*, in the solidarity of the rural and peasant communes, the seeds of socialism; they therefore, decided to follow the programme of Western socialism, to get into closer touch with the people and propagate the new ideas among them. Thus they hoped to organise a powerful revolutionary party, which one day would be strong enough to abolish autocracy and bring about a new form of

[1] Cf. Debagori-Mokrievitsh, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 36.



THE ARRIVAL OF POLITICAL PRISONERS.
(After a drawing by Madame Manya Gourevitsh.)

government.[1] They did not stop to consider whether the people were ready for these ideas. The enthusiasts believed in the moujik, quite forgetting that his mental processes and outlook would be quite different to their own. The propagandists, pessimists as to the position of the peasants, saw their readiness for a revolution in too roseate a light. They never thought that the revolutionary spirit among the peasants was like a delicate seed that had to be carefully tended and watched before it would grow up and bear fruit. In a word, they built their hopes upon the golden clouds of optimism and imagination. They were bitterly disappointed when the ideal and the real came face to face.

Among the organisations of that period of propaganda, the most famous was that of the Tshaikovtsi, called after its founder, Nicholas Tshaikovski. The most prominent members of this society, whose goal was the dissemination of revolutionary ideas among the people, were Mark Natanson (exiled to Siberia in 1871), Tshaikovski, Peter Kropotkin, Sergei Kravtshinski, Klemens, Shishko, Sinegoul, Tikhomirov, the two sisters Kornilov, Sophie Perovskaya and Obodovskaya. The members of this society, disguised as peasants and labourers, went among the people, working with them in factories and the fields.[2] They did so, either to get acquainted with the people or to stir up their consciousness, their feeling of justice, and thus prepare them for a revolution, or, more enthusiastic still, to prepare them for an immediate revolution.

[1] Cf. *Calendar Narodnaja Volya*, 1883, p. 102.

[2] Cf. Stepniak, *Underground Russia*; Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*.

But the results far from realised the hopes of the propagandists. They only convinced themselves that the people were not ready for any immediate action, that the spirit of revolt was latent in the moujik, but his ignorance and resignation were obstacles in the way of a revolution. The propagandists then came to the conclusion that the people would have to be educated, taught to understand and realise their aspirations, their miserable position and their rights. Thus the period of propaganda, of going among the people, that had appeared quite futile to some, had, after all, served a very useful purpose: it taught the youths, the students, the mental condition of the lower classes, of the people.

There is one characteristic trait of this period. The spirit of revolt had been shifted in the course of time to a different milieu. We have seen how at first it was latent among the Cossacks and the serfs, when it manifested itself in the form of Jacqueries and peasant risings, and the revolts of Stenka Razin and Pougatshev; later, in consequence of the Napoleonic wars, it had found supporters and followers among the nobility and officers, as in 1825. Now the very homestead of revolt was in the Universities and Colleges, whilst its adepts were recruited from among the intellectuals, the poets, littérateurs and philosophers. We also witness the increased participation of the Jews and women in the movement.[1]

Nietshaev's propaganda had indeed failed, but so had the propaganda of the word. Yet its results were not to be despised; the ground was gradually being prepared, the conflagration was spreading

[1] *Les Nihilistes*, etc., 1867.

and was destined, one day, to devour the structures of Tsardom, or autocracy, and sweep the house of Romanov from the arena of history. The enthusiasm and self-sacrifice that animated those noble youths should have made the Tsar reflect. He should have taken warning, but he did not. A generation of courageous young men and women who would sacrifice their own personal interests to go among the people to enlighten them, to teach them their rights, their power and their strength which, like a flood, can overturn everything, would sufficiently prepare any people for a revolution and general rising.

Influenced by the ideas coming from abroad, the Russian youth of that day, with the impressionability characteristic of the Slav, threw itself wholeheartedly into the work of active propaganda. They went among the people (*poshlee v'narod*). The people whom they did not know, the peasants who to them were a *terra incognita*, they idealised. The Russian youth went out into the promised land of the moujik. Regardless of mocking remarks, regardless of threats, the Russian student gave up his career, his future, tore himself away from his family, rubbed his face with butter and then exposed it to the sun so as to become brown and look less of a barin (gentleman), bathed his hands in tar, put on a peasant shirt, threw his knapsack with his books upon his shoulder, took his stick and went out on his journey without any fixed goal.[1] We can have nothing but the highest admiration for these apostles of liberty, these youths who went out to preach the gospel of human dignity and individual independence.

[1] Cf. Obshtshina, *Geneva*, 1878, No. I, v. 4.

No obstacle could restrain them; they went everywhere, they lived and worked among the people.

The young women, especially, left their homes and worked in the factories, in the fields and in the workshops in order to be able to spread their ideas and prepare the people to put those ideas into practice. But—alas!—the result was but a poor one. The pilgrimage of these enthusiasts, of the frail women, to the shrine of the people was without real effect. One needs only to read the articles in the revolutionary organs, *Vorwaerts* (*Vpered*) and *The Commune*, to be convinced of the failure of the agitators' efforts and to realise the despair that consequently took hold of them. In spite of the enthusiasm and the many unheard-of sacrifices, the propaganda bore but little fruit among the peasants. The *Vorwaerts* relates[1] how the peasants often denounced these young enthusiasts and gave them up to the police.

The famous Bereshkovskaya, the grandmother of the Russian Revolution, went about the country dressed as a peasant woman and worked among the people as one of themselves. The moujiks listened to her, because the rumour had spread among them that she was the Empress, who had thus come disguised among her people. Bereshkovskaya heard about a new sect in the south of Russia. She went there, worked among the peasants and explained her ideas. But the peasants replied: "What can we do? It is God's will; we will pray and suffer, for such is the will of God who is punishing us for our sins." At last they even threatened to hand her over to the

[1] Vol. ii, p. 122.

police. A little later she was denounced to the authorities and arrested.

The propaganda had proved a failure. The agitators had too little knowledge of the peasants: discontent was rampant among the latter, but they were suspicious and distrustful of the agitators. The revolutionaries learned to understand that the moujiks were still far from realising either their wrongs or their rights as men. It is false to imagine that the numerous arrests had frightened the brave apostles of freedom, or that it was for this reason that they ceased to go amongst the people. Had they found an echo in the vast forests of the peasantry, had they found the moujik ready to rise and revolt, they would not so easily have given up the work. They would not lightly have slackened their efforts and the battle would not have been given up as lost, but they saw that their work was futile; they had awakened from their dream; their ideals and hopes seemed shattered, and they had to think of new methods and new weapons for their fight against Tsardom.[1]

Thus the chief cause of the failure of the propaganda lay in the apathy of the people, the indifference of the rural population and the moujik. Yet there were also other causes underlying this failure. It may be sought also in the lack of unity and uniformity. The aims of those who went among the people varied; suspicious of mysterious committees since Nietshaev's foul deed, they acted independently of each other. The Malikovtsi, founded by Malikov, and the Lavristi, were in favour of peaceful propaganda, whilst the Buntari and the Tshaikovtsi, believed in violent methods.

[1] Cf. *Fortnightly Review*, February 1905, p. 390.

The latter dreamed of a new world founded upon a universal brotherhood, "a world where neither misery nor tears would exist."

The Government, of course, was not idle. In 1873 several of the propagandists fell into the hands of the police, and in 1874, in consequence of a denunciation, arrests were made *en masse*. Severe measures were taken by autocracy against the secret societies, and once more the revolutionary movement was retarded in its development. In the course of a few months over 1,000 conspirators were arrested.[1] The propagandists realised their mistake, but yet they had learned something during their pilgrimage to the holy shrine of the people's soul: they had learned that the time was not yet ripe, that the peasant had not yet reached the necessary phase of evolution that would render him accessible to socialistic and revolutionary propaganda. On the one hand the severe measures taken by the Government, and on the other the deep disappointment caused by their failure, induced many to secede from the revolutionary movement. Upon some, however, the severity of the Government had the opposite effect: it increased their decision to struggle to the bitter end; it enhanced their courage and spirit of self-sacrifice.

New tactics were adopted. The organisation of *Semlya i Volya*—Land and Freedom—was revived. The propagandists had learned that the peasants were discontented, but that their discontent was directed chiefly against the bureaucracy and the landowners; not against the Tsar, whose person was sacred to them. Yet the moujiks, though ignorant, were not without common

[1] Biloe, 1906, No. 9, pp. 269–76.

sense and had formed ideals and ideas of their own. They desired the distribution of the land and the abolition of rates and taxes. The latter should be levied upon human work, but not upon the soil that had been created by God. Such were the positive demands of the peasants; these they understood, and could argue with shrewd common sense about them. Socialistic or anarchistic ideas and ideals and abstract theories found no echo in the consciousness of the moujik. Therefore the propagandists decided to abandon the Western ideals of socialism and concentrate their activity upon the demands and requirements of the Russian people. The propaganda should not be of a nomadic sporadic nature, but of a permanent character; the propagandists would settle permanently in the villages in which they were to agitate. The revolutionary ideas should be spread, not only among the peasants but also among the factory hands and the intellectuals.

In 1876 several old members of the Tshaikovtsi formed a new group; it was first known as the Troglodytes, or Narodniki, and later, in 1878 and 1879, after their organ, *Land and Freedom—Semlya i Volya.* Their programme insisted upon the propagandists' settlement among the people. The members maintained that there were a number of revolutionary elements among the people, but that these had to be found and organised, and then the fight could begin. The propaganda of the word was to be followed by the propaganda of the deed. This was about the time that Bakunin died at Berne, July 1st, 1876, and Tkatshev founded his paper *Nabat,* or *The Stormbelt,* at Zurich. Tkatshev was in favour of a political

revolution instead of socialism. He also recommended terrorism instead of lukewarm propaganda. He criticised sharply the systems of Lavrov, and even of Bakunin, in an essay entitled, *Anarchy of Thought.* Tkatshev was a Jacobine and a Blanquist, but his ideas found no echo among his compatriots of that day.

The revolutionary movement and its ardour may be said to have somewhat abated during this period. The reasons for this were twofold. The vigilance of the police, the punishments, prison and exile meted out to the revolutionaries made a more intense activity difficult. But there was a more psychological cause of this diminished activity, and that was the Russo-Turkish War. The enthusiasm of Russia's youth had found a new goal, a new object, a new field for its energy. The majority of the socialists in Russia were against the war, but theirs were but voices crying in the wilderness. Youth and ardour love war, and governments know well how to picture the romance and idealism of battles in glowing colours that will appeal to the heated imagination of the people, ignorant and educated alike. There has never been a war in the history of the world which has admittedly been fought for reasons of greed, revenge or ambition. According to the statements of the contemporary governments every war has been a war of ideas, of altruism, a war for the benefit of humanity and the future generations.

The war of 1878 was greeted with enthusiasm by many of the revolutionaries. To them it was a holy war, a war for the liberation of their Serbian and Bulgarian brethren from the yoke of Russia's hereditary enemy, the Turk. Sometimes it seems

to one to be a pity that man has not been given the power of foreseeing the future, of beholding the world as it will be a century, or even half a century hence. What a shock it would be to the idealists and dreamers! What a disappointment to the hosts of martyrs and men of action who fondly imagined they were laying the foundations of happiness and well-being for future generations, to see those very people scorn and laugh at the ideals, political, social and religious for which their forebears had suffered and bled! How unhappy man would be could he but raise the veil of Isis and take peeps into the future! He would witness scenes, quite natural to the contemporaries, but which would shock and appal him and greatly alter his mode of life and thought. Oh, what a waste of time and labour, he would cry, waste of blood and happiness. I sacrificed all these for the future generations, and lo, they are not even grateful, but throw away the goods I bequeathed unto them for valueless baubles!

Of course, such a revelation of the future would always be a shock and a disappointment to the true dreamers and idealists, but not to the majority of mankind. The majority of men too rarely fight for altruistic motives or for the benefit of future generations. If the Russian enthusiasts of 1878 had been allowed to witness the events of 1915 and see the Bulgarian legions sending bullets into the hearts of the descendants of the very men who died for Bulgarian liberty, who, for a moment, put aside Russia's grievances and rallied around autocracy, European history might have taken a different course. With equal justice we might say that if we of this generation were able

to see the world as it will be fifty years hence, it would probably give us much food for thought, and history might take a different course. But, alas, the future is a sealed book, the veil of Isis cannot be lifted, and even if true prophets or seers arise in our midst and foretell us the future, we promptly howl them down and declare them liars. If we go no further and do not stone, crucify or imprison them, at least we do our best to hush up their prophecy, spoken or written.

Like the Crimean War, the Balkan War proved a failure. Russia's sacrifices were rewarded by the sweet illusion of San Stefano and the rude realism of Berlin, thanks to Bismarck. Bureaucracy that had fanned the enthusiasm for war into flame gained very little, but the revolutionary spirit gathered new strength, as it is always bound to do in time of war, and as has always been the case in Russia, especially since the beginning of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER X

REACTION AND TERRORISM

RUSSIA of 1878, as ignorant as we of the future, greeted the Balkan War with enthusiasm. The Slavophils were enthusiastic over the freedom and deliverance of their Slavonic brethren, and their ardour was fed by the ideal expansion policy of Panslavism, or Russian Imperialism. Bureaucracy also industriously fanned the patriotic flame into war; bureaucracy always gains in times of national stress. Days of storm and strain, of patriotic ardour and national sacrifice, when every one will submit to the most absurd and autocratic rulings in the belief that they are in the interests of the country and that, in some way, one is helping the nation by submitting to these measures, these are halcyon days for bureaucracy. Its power and its extravagance daily increase.

Again, Russian bureaucracy thought that the war would be a splendid channel into which the waters of discontent could be turned; a bed into which the sea of rebellion could discharge its roaring waves. The dreamers and revolutionary spirits could cool their burning brows safely on the battlefields. The bayonets of the enemy would open a vein for the tempestuous, delirious Russian youth, and a little bloodletting would do them a

world of good. So thought bureaucracy, and therefore it urged the Emperor to go to war. The superficial, enthusiastic, naïve liberals rushed to the war to fight for Bulgaria's freedom, but the more far-sighted revolutionaries clearly perceived that the war was merely a trap laid by the Russian bureaucracy. The results of the war did not compensate Russia for her sacrifices. Russia's Imperialism did not succeed in finding an aerie on the Bosphorus for the eagle of the Tsars. And if bureaucracy and Tsardom had hoped to asphyxiate revolution in the powder atmosphere of Plevna, to drown it in the blood oceans in Serbia, they were mistaken. The spirit of revolt rose rejuvenated, like a phœnix, out of the fire and smoke of the battlefields. The revolutionary spirit had gathered new strength during the war, for the rottenness of the existing régime had been revealed in all its ugliness and hopelessness; it had proved how very little the upper governing classes and the bureaucracy cared for the people, how the soldiers who had gone out to fight had been mercilessly sacrificed to their selfishness and ambition. The dirty water was grist to the mill of revolution.

Meanwhile, the famous trials of the revolutionaries and political criminals took place at Moscow and St. Petersburg. Fifty, and then 193 accused were implicated.[1] This was a splendid opportunity for the spirit of revolt. The revolutionaries had not been permitted to announce their theories, aims or goal publicly, either at meetings or through the press; now, they were able to proclaim to the public in their speeches of defence all that they

[1] Cf. Lavigne, *l.c.*, p. 352.

were anxious to say. They turned the dock into a tribune and a public platform. The nation heard, and for the first time learned, the truth about its miserable position, of the failure of the reforms, the guilt and duplicity of the Government, and the absolute necessity for a revolution. Russia heard and was astonished. The Government kept the procedure as secret as possible; few were admitted, but every word spoken by the accused, the reproaches they hurled at the Government and the judges, all were known and eagerly listened to by the public.

On January 23rd, 1879, Alexander signed the sentence of the political criminals. The number of people, inclusive of witnesses, implicated in these trials has been estimated at 3,800; the accused, including their accomplices, were 770; 193 alone were tried at St. Petersburg. Seventy died during the long months of the trial; thirteen were sent to penal servitude and to the mines; a number were set free, but were not permitted to enjoy their freedom, various administrative measures being taken to punish them; others again were never tried at all, but were secretly arrested and dispatched, no one knew whither, by the Third Section.

On the day following the announcement of the sentence passed upon the 193 political criminals, Vera Sassoulitsh shot Trepov, the chief of police, at St. Petersburg. Trepov, six months previously, had administered corporal punishment to a political prisoner, a man named Bogdanovitsh, and it was with the intention of revenging this ignominy that this Russian Charlotte Corday acted; she had gained an audience by pretending that she

wished to hand him a petition. Her shot was the signal for renewed activity on the part of the revolutionaries. Yet that shot also found a sympathetic echo in the society of the day. Vera had fired at a moment when the public was feeling greatly embittered against the Government, therefore it was ready to greet her act with sympathy and admiration, to hail her as a martyr in the struggle of humanity against brutality and oppression.

The tables were turned. It was not Vera now who was being judged, but Trepov; and not only Trepov the man, the private person, but Trepov the incarnation of the principle of administrative arbitrariness and autocratic oppression. The eyes of the nation, suffering and oppressed while its Government claimed to be doing everything possible for its benefit, were opening at last. The idea of terroristic methods gradually grew among the revolutionaries. Single terroristic acts had already taken place, but the spirit of revolt did not systematically adopt terrorism until 1879. The shot fired by Vera Sassoulitsh seemed to be a trumpet call to the revolutionaries to begin active terrorism.

Vera was acquitted; it seemed that Tsardom and not Vera was on trial. Truly the spirit of revolt was beginning, at last, to triumph. Terrorism became a recognised method of work, and even the fashion. Spies met their just deserts. Baron Heyking, colonel of gendarmes, was stabbed at Kiev. Valerian Ossinski, whom Speranski describes as the Apollo of Revolution, became the leader of terrorism. The spirit of revolt had become desperate. Pacific propaganda having proved

itself useless, it now adopted violent means. If Tsardom would not listen to reason, then it would have to yield to terror. Alexander appealed to the public and called upon society and all loyal citizens to help the Government against this terrorism. But Tsardom had no friends. It was paying the penalty. It had worked to create in Russia a race of slaves, not free citizens; and slaves, unless they have willingly accepted the spirit of slavery, are never the friends of their masters. "The days when the Tsar was sacrosanct," were long past. The belief that the Tsar was the vicegerent of God on earth, a theory so carefully developed by Karamsin, was now held by very few in Russia. The spirit of revolt was brooding over the entire nation. Not all were vigorous enough to help, but all yearned for the deed of deliverance.

Semlya i Volya was reorganised by Mikhailov, Sundelevitsh and others. Tourgeniev, who had been living abroad, now visited Russia and was heartily lionised. The Government looked askance at these demonstrations in honour of the author of *Fathers and Sons*, but it dared not arrest him; it merely advised him to leave Russia again.

A number of attempts were made to kill Alexander. The Government answered them by a system of repression and terrorism. The suspicious followers of revolt were arrested *en masse*, sent to prisons, the mines, Siberia or the scaffold. The fight between Tsardom and the spirit of freedom became an open one. It was a fierce and bitter struggle, a struggle to the death. Many brave spirits disappeared and were swallowed up.

by the revenge of autocracy, in the desperate efforts it made to continue its existence.

Valerian Ossinski died on the gallows at Kiev on May 14th (26th), 1879. Then the revolutionary camp split into two parties; the organisation *Semlya i Volya* divided into two distinct sections: the Terrorists and the Social Federalists. The former founded the *Narodnaya Volya* (The Will of the People) organisation; these aimed at carrying terrorism to its very utmost. The latter, with their organ, *Tshornyi Peredel, Black Division,* were more inclined towards again attempting socialist propaganda. They proposed to form the rural population into a sort of Irish Land League and thus exercise pressure upon the authorities and bring about a social upheaval and transform Russia into a Federated Republic. The terrorists had the upper hand; passion always triumphs over words of moderation. Besides, the terrorists declared that as soon as the then State was overthrown, they would again become simple, peaceful socialist reformers. This they honestly meant, but, nevertheless, they were mistaken in their estimate of themselves. The venom outlives the serpent.

It is always wrong to employ terrorist methods for peaceful purposes. Even Governments have made this mistake. They imagine that they may with impunity preach hate and destruction, and still have the power suddenly to say: Stop! it is enough; now it is time to love! Once humanity has grown accustomed to hating, it cannot learn overnight to love what it has well hated. The feeling of hate will take long to make way for that of love. Once the powers, the passions, are let



THE FORTRESS OF SCHLUESSELBURG.
(After a drawing by Madame Manya Gourevitsh.)

loose, it is not so easy to control them again; if they find nothing of the old, hated order to destroy, they will set to work against the new: the feeling of destruction is so powerful. The present state in Russia and the present war well illustrate this.

Congresses of delegates of the two parties were convened at Lipetsk and Voronezh; among others Mikhailov, Zhelyabov, Tikhomirov, Fomenko, Shiriaev, Goldenberg, Sophie Perovskaja and Vera Figner attended them. The *Narodnaya Volya* became the recognised organ, and an executive committee of the revolutionaries was appointed; this was a secret organisation, reminding one of the ancient Venetian Republic. The programme of Lipetsk was as follows: Universal suffrage, freedom of conscience, of press and of meeting; permanent national representative assembly; abolition of standing army; self-government and autonomy of communities; the entire land to be divided among the peasants and the factories among the workers. As Alexander did not seem inclined to realise this programme, the committee condemned him to death on August 26th, 1879.

It was a desperate, let us even say, a wrong step, but it was the logical outcome, the logical result of the idea, of the spirit of revolt in Russia that Alexander was endeavouring to crush. It was war; the belligerents were seeking each other's downfall. The fight was not in secret but in the open. Both belligerents, Tsardom and the spirit of revolution, availed themselves of the weapons at their disposal. If Tsardom has a right, said the revolutionaries, to send our men, women, and soldiers to the mines, the dry guillo-

tine, or to the scaffold, we, too, have the right to fight Tsardom and legally declare war upon it. If we are not allowed to make our demands publicly, to plead for democracy openly in legislative assemblies, in parliaments and senates, to criticise the Government and call upon it to answer, if we are muzzled and throttled, then we are in a state of self-defence. The man attacked by evildoers who intend not only to rob but also to kill him, can he stop to consider the delicacies of conscience and scruple about the choice of a weapon with which to defend himself? He can only seize whatever falls into his hand with which to defend his life and his property. What we are doing is not planned murder; it is legitimate, legalised war: war that all society and moralists heartily approve of. If, when I kill the enemy of my country I am called a patriot and a hero; if by shooting the general of a hostile army, I do an act that my compatriots will applaud and history record among the glorious deeds of man, then, since the Tsar is not only my enemy but also that of my country and of my people, and he refuses to fight with me on an equal footing, I am justified in choosing my own weapons against him. Such were the reassuring arguments of the Committee of Terrorism, and it must be admitted that they were based upon the morality and ethics taught and practised by society then as now.

The active revolutionaries found many supporters among the members of the aristocracy and the minor officials who either could not, or would not, themselves take an active part in the revolution, but who yet sympathised with the movement. These were called the "Oukrivateli," or

hiders. This shows how the spirit of revolt was advancing. Thus the illegal government, as the revolutionary committee was called, found helpers and adherents among the employees of the legal government. Officers and even police officials lent them a helping hand. The culminating point of the Narodnaya Volya was reached on March 1st (13th), 1881, when Alexander was assassinated by a bomb thrown by Grinetzky. Five revolutionaries, the accomplices of the regicide, namely, Zhelyabov, Mikhailov, Kibaltshitsh, Ryssakov and Sophie Perovskaya, were condemned to death and hanged on April 3rd (15th). Jesse Helfmann, being enceinte, was spared. But the spirit of revolt did not die upon the gallows with the regicides. It merely fluttered forth in search of a new homestead. The next day the committee addressed a missive to the new Tsar, Alexander III, in which they told him that the events of March 1st had not been unpremeditated, and called upon him to take the tragedy to heart and to read the mene, tekel which the spirit of revolt was writing with letters of blood upon the walls of Tsardom.

"You may rest assured, Sire," wrote the members of the secret committee to Alexander III, "that on the day on which the supreme power ceases to be autocratic, on which you will firmly decide to listen to what the conscience and the will of the people are dictating to you, on that day you will be able to free the streets of your spies who are a dishonour to the Government; you will be able to leave your escorts in their barracks and uproot your gallows that demoralise the people. Once these conditions are realised, then a peaceful conflict of ideas will take the place of

the present violence, which, incidentally, we abhor even more than your servants, and which necessity and circumstances alone have forced us to use." Terrorism was only a means, a weapon which a peaceful man wielded against his foe; it was the war of the oppressed, the invaded against the invader. The peaceful invaded hates war and its awful horrors, but the brutal invader leaves him no choice. Such was the philosophy of the Terrorists.

Alexander answered the challenge by entrusting the famous and ferocious Ignatiev with the power to suppress revolution without pity. Every kind of propaganda was then forbidden by the Government of Russia. The fighters for political freedom were at once imprisoned, sent to Siberia, to the mines; all without any form of trial by jury or judgment. Many a young boy or girl suddenly disappeared, and when their heartbroken parents inquired concerning the fate of their children, they were advised by the minions who watched over the safety of the autocrat to stop their researches. Their son or daughter had disappeared, *voilà tout*. However, numbers of the accused were granted a semblance of a trial before a jury who had been commanded to condemn the prisoner. Unhappy boys and girls were sentenced to death, or to penal servitude for life, for the sole crime of having distributed proclamations. Very often the accusation was utterly false; it had only been a simple daily paper that the prisoner had handed to some soldier who had asked for it. The following story, one out of hundreds, typifies the system employed during the reign of Alexander III.

Vanya Disappears

It was a beautiful day and the sun was shining brightly when the student Vanya went out for a stroll on the Nevski Prospect. Spring was outside, but not in the heart of Vanya. Neither the glorious weather nor the song of the birds could gladden the heart of the youth of twenty nor dispel his gloomy thoughts. He was sad and his heart was heavy. On the previous evening several of his comrades, boys and girls, dreamers of freedom, had been arrested by the police, the slaves of autocracy; they had been dragged away to prison, thence to the casemates and cells of the Russian Bastille. Despair was in Vanya's heart; for him nature was shrouded in a veil of unutterable sadness and hopelessness.

Aimlessly he strolled along the boulevard, bought a copy of *The Russian Thought* (*Rousskaya Mysl'*) and sat down on a bench. The paper did not cheer him; the leading article spoke of many arrests, and the name of a certain Colonel Lotov was mentioned several times. With a sinking heart Vanya read of the various cruel punishments meted out to the political prisoners. He thought he would smoke a cigarette, but found that he had no matches. Looking round he noticed two young soldiers standing at the gate of the barracks near, so he went to them and asked if they could give him a light. One of the soldiers handed Vanya his matchbox, then seeing the newspaper, asked if he might borrow it for a few moments to read.

"Ah, so you are able to read?" said Vanya.

"To read and to write," proudly replied the

soldier; "he cannot though," he added, pointing to his companion, "but we are both glad to learn what is happening in the world."

"Take it," said Vanya, handing the paper to the soldier, "but, alas, there is no news except that of bloodshed, punishments and murders."

"Yes," said the soldiers, "these are difficult times."

"Very difficult indeed," replied Vanya. "You, for instance, does it make you happy when you are ordered to shoot your fellow men? What horror!"

At this moment the student was brutally interrupted by a sergeant who suddenly emerged from behind the gate.

"How dare you speak to the soldiers?" he shouted. "I see what you are up to." Turning to the soldier he snatched the newspaper out of his hand, examined it, and then scrutinised Vanya, who stood there smiling.

"Call the officer on guard," the sergeant suddenly commanded one of the soldiers.

Vanya was still smiling. "Why are you so angry?" he queried innocently. "I have done nothing. I only gave my newspaper to the soldier to read. Is that forbidden?"

"You will know soon enough," began the sergeant, and then suddenly stood rigid.

The colonel was approaching.

"What's the matter?" asked the latter, looking severely at the group.

"I have caught an agitator," reported the sergeant. "I heard him ask one of the soldiers for a match, and then, after entering into conversation with them, reproach them for shooting at

revolutionaries. He has even done more, he handed a proclamation to the soldiers."

Vanya was surprised.

"What proclamation?" he protested; "it was only a newspaper which I had just bought."

"We asked him for some paper," one soldier ventured to explain, "in which to roll up some cigarettes."

They were evidently afraid to admit that one was able to read and write.

"You be quiet," thundered the sergeant.

"What newspaper was it?" queried the colonel.

"*The Russian Thought*," replied Vanya.

The colonel cast a glance over the paper, then commanded briefly:

"Take him to the guard room; I shall soon follow."

Vanya did not understand. "But what have I done?" he stammered.

"You had better go quietly or else you will be taken by force," was the only reply he received to his question.

He was led away, and in the guard room was questioned by the colonel.

"I could hand you over to the police for agitating among the soldiers and troubling discipline, but I shall not do so," said Colonel Lotov, for it was none other, and he smiled ominously.

Colonel Lotov was a zealous servant of autocracy and notorious for the promptitude with which he executed orders received from high quarters. More than once he had been ordered to pacify some revolted districts, and he had pacified them in his own way. He had been told

not to spare, and he had not spared; he was a faithful servant. His soldiers called him the Butcher among themselves, but the colonel looked upon himself as an ordinary upholder of discipline and order. Well, here was a young man who had dared to hand a paper to his soldiers, a paper in which some scribe had dared to criticise him, Colonel Lotov. How gladly he would have ordered his soldiers to direct their machine-guns against all newspaper offices, but the higher spheres had not yet issued such an order. What a pity!

"Is this your paper?" he asked Vanya.

"Yes," quietly replied the student.

"Do you know its contents?"

"Yes."

"Then how dared you offer it to my soldiers and let them read these criticisms against me, their colonel?"

"I did not know your name was Lotov. I did not know to what regiment the soldiers belonged. It is a mere coincidence."

"Lies!" thundered the colonel. "Now I could treat you as an agitator and hand you over to the police, but," and again Colonel Lotov smiled his ominous smile, "I shall treat you like a naughty school boy."

"Bring the lash," he ordered, turning to his orderly.

Vanya was no longer smiling; he was boiling with indignation.

"How dare you?" he cried.

"You will soon know how I dare," replied Lotov. "The lash, I say," he commanded again; "hurry."

The vein on his forehead was visibly swelling; his soldiers knew what it meant.

Vanya dragged himself along, stealthily, like a criminal hiding from men; he dared not return to his lodgings. There was but one human being whom he could face now; that was his friend Sergey. He stumbled into Sergey's room and, falling on his friend's neck, uttered a piercing cry, the cry of a hunted animal.

"I have been horsewhipped!"

A week elapsed. Colonel Lotov had already forgotten the adventure; he was in a good humour. Everything was going well with him; order and obedience reigned everywhere; his wife and children, his servants, his subordinates, not to speak of his soldiers, all were showing the proper spirit of submission. Only that morning he had punished his son, and the latter had humbly begged for forgiveness and promised to obey in future. Lotov had also boxed the ears of his orderly and asked him whether he realised that he was a fool.

"Yes, your honour is right," the latter had submissively answered.

Colonel Lotov walked along proudly, as befitted a man who had done his full duty. He had rendered valuable services to the autocratic and bureaucratic régime and he was expecting some signal reward for his zeal. Suddenly a young man, haggard and pale, barred his way.

"I have seen him somewhere," thought Colonel Lotov, but he did not recognise in the haggard and pale-faced individual, whose eyes were so

threatening, the rosy-cheeked student whom he had ordered to be whipped but a week ago.

"Colonel Lotov," cried Vanya, "your day will come, the day when Russia's Lotovs will pay the penalty of their crimes, but, for the present, take this on account," and he boxed the ears of the astounded colonel and disappeared before Lotov could stop him.

Vanya became a revolutionary. He distributed proclamations among the soldiers and spoke to them of their real duty, their duty to the suffering masses. One evening a secret meeting was held in some back room; the police made a raid and arrested all present, among them Vanya. The student disappeared and was dead to the world.

Far away, in a small provincial town in the government of Saratov, a poor, lonely woman paced her room restlessly. From time to time she approached the window and looked out, anxious to catch sight of the postman. She was expecting a letter from her dear boy away in the capital.

"Strange," she murmured, "Vanya has not written for weeks. He must be ill," thought the mother in despair. Then suddenly a dread thought flashed through her brain; her heart stood still, her very blood seemed to freeze. Had not her nephew Polivanov had an affair? And it was only years afterwards that her brother had learned that his boy was still alive in Schluesselburg, but the poor heartbroken father was allowed to die without seeing his son.

With a mother's instinct Vanya's mother guessed the cause of her son's silence. He was dead, dead to her and to the world. Somewhere he was

stretching out his arms to her, calling to her, but she was helpless to aid him. There was no mercy shown to political prisoners at the throne of the Tsar. There was the sound of a fall, and when the servant rushed in she found the old woman in a swoon on the floor.

When the unhappy mother recovered and was able to travel, she at once left for the capital. Alas, her efforts, her supplications, her tears were futile. Vanya had disappeared. It was months afterwards that she learned from an official whom she had heavily bribed that her son was still alive.

"But," added her benefactor, "take my advice, do not inquire further after your son; go home and forget him. The higher spheres might resent your insistence; they do not like to be reminded of the fact that there are such things as *oubliettes* and bastilles in Russia."

This story was told to me one day in the Café de la Régence, while outside an enthusiastic crowd was cheering "Le Tsar blanc!"

For generations, oceans of tears, oceans of blood have been shed by Russian mothers, tears for which autocracy has been responsible. Numerous Russian mothers are once more shedding tears, but now they are tears of joy, for no longer will their boys and girls be hurled into the casemates of autocracy's bastilles, the fortresses of Petropavlovsk and Schluesselburg, there to die, commit suicide or lose their reason. The day of freedom has broken at last.

Death and penal servitude were the mild punishments which Tsardom meted out to its enemies. In its refined cruelty, Autocracy conceived of

solitary confinement. It was a slow, gradual death that drove its victims to despair. The bastilles into which the Tsars used to throw their enemies were, at first, the fortresses of St. Peter and St. Paul—oh, apostles of the religion of love, what a mockery of your teaching!—and then the famous fortress of Schluesselburg. In the casemates of Schluesselburg, in its living tombs, the "politicals" passed their unfortunate lives, dead to the world. The names and memoirs of the prisoners of the Russian bastilles would fill volumes. At random, let me mention the names of a few of the pioneers of Russian freedom in its struggle against autocracy.

The daily papers have mentioned that among those who went to the Taurida Palace to applaud the Russian Revolution and to rejoice over the downfall of Tsardom, was an old man, Herman Lopatin. Lopatin was one of the victims of the régime of autocracy—one of the lucky victims, for he has lived to see the triumph of liberty and the defeat of oppression. He is one of the few survivors of that glorious epoch when thousands of Russian boys and girls fought and suffered and died for freedom. Many of Lopatin's comrades went to an early grave, and only their shades now see with grim satisfaction the tragedy of the house of Romanov.

Herman Lopatin was born in 1845, and belongs to a noble Russian family. He studied at the Gymnasium (Grammar School) of Stavropol, and then entered the University of St. Petersburg, where he took his degree in 1866 with a treatise on biology. A scientific career was open to the young savant, but his ardent nature craved for a

life of action and endeavour. Garibaldi had just then unfurled the banner of revolt, so Lopatin went to Italy to join his movement for freedom. But he arrived too late, for Garibaldi had already been made a prisoner (November 15th, 1867). Lopatin then returned to Russia, where he became a member of a society formed to teach the moujiks to read and write. Lopatin was arrested, for to spread instruction among the ignorant peasants was a crime under the rule of autocracy, He escaped however, and reached Paris in 1870. From Paris he went to London, where he met Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. It was while in London that he translated Marx's famous work, *Das Capital*, into Russian.

Suddenly, the young revolutionary disappeared. Whither had he gone? His friends soon learned where. The Russian revolutionary movement at that time had no leader, no competent chief; there was but one man who could have taken up the reins of leadership: Nicholas Tshernyshevski. Nicholas Tshernyshevski, however, was exiled in Siberia, sent there by Tsardom. Lopatin had conceived the daring plan of attempting to liberate the leader from captivity and bring him out of Russia where he would be safe. He arrived at Irkutsk, and was on the very point of realising his daring project, but—the servants of autocracy were not easily caught napping. An agent of the Russian secret police in Geneva wired to his headquarters in Russia that Lopatin was in Siberia to help Tshernyshevski to escape. Autocracy was alarmed. Lopatin was arrested at Irkutsk and remained in prison for fully three years. Then, with a daring and courage that would scarcely

find their equal in the annals of famous prison escapes, he managed to regain his freedom, and, after many vicissitudes and dangers, arrived at Tomsk. He was arrested once more and taken back to Irkutsk. Here, while he was in the private room of the judge, through the open window he saw a horse waiting for him. To jump through the window and mount the horse was the work of a moment, and before the astonished judge could call for help, Lopatin had galloped safely away. Disguised in the garb of a peasant he arrived at St. Petersburg, and thence proceeded to Zurich, where he collaborated with Lavrov in the review *Forwards*.

It was dangerous for Lopatin to return to Russia, but nevertheless, for the sake of the cause, he did so. He was tracked by an agent of the secret police and again arrested. Once more he escaped, and reached Paris in 1883. Here he became one of the most active members of the party "Narodnaya Volya" (The Will of the People), and a contributor to their organ, the *Messenger of the Will of the People*.

Few men would again have dared to return to Russia, but the good of the cause demanded it, so Lopatin did not hesitate to place his head in the lion's mouth. He was arrested for the last time in October 1884, and remained in prison for three years before he was tried. On June 17th, 1887, Lopatin was condemned to death, as were also his colleagues, Salova, Soukhomlin, Henriette Dobrushkin, Sergius Ivanov and the famous poet Yakubovitsh. In his great clemency, the Tsar commuted the death-penalty into that of penal servitude for a time, to be followed by perpetual

solitary confinement in the fortress of Schlüsselburg.

The fortress of Schluesselburg is situated at a distance of about fifty-four versts from Petrograd, on an island of the Lake Ladoga. If walls could speak, what terrible tales those of Schluesselburg could tell! They have heard the cries of agony of the victims of autocracy and witnessed scenes of unspeakable horror. Schluesselburg was the living tomb where the fighters for freedom passed their unhappy days, dead to the outside world. The prison of Schluesselburg was built in 1883, during the reign of Alexander III, father of the ex-Tsar Nicholas II, and received its first inmates and guests in August 1884. Within its walls, from 1884 to 1905, it harboured sixty-seven politicals, among them the famous Vera Figner and Gershuni. Thirteen of the prisoners were executed, three committed suicide—Klimenko, Gratshevsky, and Mlle. Sophie Ginsburg—and sixteen died in an access of insanity.

Herman Lopatin, whose spirit, in spite of the years passed in the casemates of the Russian bastille, was still undaunted, was one of the eight prisoners liberated in 1905 during the short-lived revolutionary triumph. The veteran fighter is but one of the thousands who have suffered for freedom. The road to Russian liberty is strewn with the numerous graves of the heroes and heroines who have fallen in the sacred cause, the graves of poets, philosophers and dreamers, of men of thought and of action. Like the heroes of ancient Sparta, their spirits will call to future travellers in a free Russia: "Stranger, tell them at Moscow and at Petrograd, at Pskov and at Kiev, that we

died because we loved our country and liberty. We fell victims to the cruelty of Tsardom and bureaucracy. Tell them to cherish the newly won freedom and to swear vengeance on all tyrants, autocrats and oppressors, be their names Romanov, Hapsburg or Hohenzollern."

At first, the political prisoners were kept in Petropavlovsk—the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul—and the portion which harboured them was known as the "Ravelin of Alexis," or the Bastion Troubetskoy. Why Ravelin of Alexis? Because it was here that Peter the Great imprisoned, tortured and put to death his own son Alexis. It is an oubliette far away from the world; no noise from without can enter or penetrate it. The cells —nineteen in number—are scarcely above the water level; they are tombs, and when the Neva rises many disappear. It was here that Princess Tarakanov died. The Romanovs have often got rid of their opponents in this way. One prisoner, a lady—Yakinova—had a young baby but a few months old, with her, and she had to be perpetually on guard that the rats did not devour the child. It was also in the Ravelin that Bakunin was imprisoned. Out of the seven politicals imprisoned in the Ravelin in March 1882, five died before two years were out. Many men, strong and vigorous in health when imprisoned, suffered terribly from various diseases; some were unable even to articulate one word when finally set free.

From Petropavlovsk the prisoners were taken by boat to Schluesselburg; the boat itself was a floating tomb with cells. It was the custom to seize the political prisoners, bandage their eyes and carry them off in that helpless and terrifying



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condition: they had no idea whither they were being taken, and often imagined that they were to be drowned. One of the most terrible punishments, worse than the ill-treatment, bad food, privation of freedom, etc., was the silence and inactivity to which the criminals were condemned. This awful silence of the tomb!—"By order of the Tsar"—no right to speak, even half-aloud! and if they dared to speak, the jailers had no right to reply.

"You have no right to speak to the jailers," said the prison director to one political; "they are all mute; I alone here am allowed to speak."

Silence, inactivity, isolation! Such was the punishment meted out to the opponents of autocracy. The prisoner was dead; not even his parents had a right to inquire after him. The father of Konashevitsh died many years after his son had disappeared, not knowing where his boy was, or even if he were still alive. Sometimes, by means of long research and much bribery, parents would obtain the knowledge that "Your son is still alive."

When the prisoners cried out in their agony, they were dragged away to a distant cell. If the comrades who heard the cries protested, or even inquired, they were rudely told not to inquire or care about others: "There are no others; here you are alone."

Bogdanovitsh, one of the political prisoners, was dying of phthisis; the cell near his being empty, Vera Figner asked to be transferred to it. By means of knocks she hoped to let him know that there was another human being in the world, there was a friend, a comrade near him. Her

request was refused, and Bogdanovitsh died alone. At last, in 1896, it was graciously granted to "the others" that they might be present when a comrade died.

Many of the prisoners committed suicide. Gratshevsky soaked his mattress in petrol and burned himself alive. One can imagine what tortures he must have suffered to have preferred such a death. Sophie Ginsburg cut her throat with an old and rusty pair of scissors. Arontshik was one of those who lost his reason. Vera Figner and Wolkenstein, the two lady prisoners, had some small privileges granted them. They received a little milk and sugar. For hours they would hold the cup of milk with the sugar in it over their lamps in order to make a kind of sweet known as *tianoutshki*, which they then smuggled in to some of their comrades. Their crime was eventually discovered and the sweets were confiscated.

It is a strange coincidence that Goremykin, who is a prisoner in Schluesselburg and who is said to have lost his reason, was in power when Konashevitsh—a descendant of the famous hetman of the Cossacks, Konashevitsh Zagaidatshny—and Shtshevni were, though mad, imprisoned in Schluesselburg; one was there for seven and the other for ten years before they were sent to a lunatic asylum.

Among the sixty-seven political prisoners at Schluesselburg from 1884 to 1905, five were sent to a prison in Moscow and thirteen to Siberia. Vera-Figner, after twenty years of detention, was deported to the province of Arkhangelsk in 1903. Mme. Wolkenstein left the prison after thirteen years' detention, but in 1906 was shot in the street

during a revolt at Vladivostock. When Polivanov was freed from the prison after twenty years detention, he said: "I am only twenty-four years old." That had been his age when he was first incarcerated. He committed suicide at Lorient in France in 1903!

Such was the answer of Alexander III to the letter addressed to him by the executive committee. His whole reign was a reign of silence and terror. Autocracy was confident, for it knew that the Narodnaya had not the masses behind it, While the members of the Narodnaya claimed that they expressed the voice of the masses, autocracy and its supporters maintained that Tsardom was the expression and the very incarnation of the Slavonic soul, that democracy was dangerous and that autocracy alone was capable of furthering the welfare of the people. Of course, both sides, autocracy and the spirit of revolt, were, or pretended to be, working in the interests of the people. Among the supporters of autocracy and of the policy of Alexander III one man deserves especial mention: I refer to Pobiedonostzev.

CHAPTER XI

THE JEWS AS PIONEERS OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Among the ethnic groups whose discontent and opposition to Tsardom had necessarily reached vast proportions, and who largely contributed to the downfall of autocracy, is that of the Jews. To a greater degree than the Poles, the Letts or Finns, or, indeed, any other ethnic group in the vast Empire of the Romanovs, they have been the artisans of the Revolution of 1917. The martyrology of the so-called foreign races in Russia, who, one must admit, have all been compelled to bring their holocausts to the Moloch Tsardom, cannot be compared to that of the Jews. The persecutions, the marytrdom the Jewish race has undergone in Russia is well known; their "legal sufferings," the vexatious laws promulgated against them, the pogroms and massacres are still recent history; I hope that the memory of their sufferings has not been wiped away by this world war that is now raging over Europe, a war that is being fought for the deliverance and the emancipation of oppressed nationalities. Certainly the Jews of Russia have a right, by suffering, to a place of honour among the oppressed nationalities of the world.

It was but natural that the Jews should take a prominent part in the movement of Russian

liberation. When Professor Errera wrote that few Jews could be found among the revolutionaries in Russia, he was absolutely wrong. "Loin de pouvoir accuser les Juifs russes d'être révolutionaires, on serait porté plutôt à s'étonner de leur résignation plus qu'évangélique, car il y a longtemps que leur joue gauche comme leur joue droite, a été meurtrie de soufflets." [1] To this statement I cannot subscribe. On the contrary, I maintain that not only have the Jews of Russia good and valid reasons to be on the side of the revolution, but that, in reality, they have contributed individually and collectively, as an ethnic and religious group, to the movement of emancipation in Russia and to the triumph of democracy. Yet Professor Errera's opinion has for a long time been accepted by many Jews, at least officially.

In Western Europe, Englishmen and Frenchmen of the Hebrew persuasion—as many sons of Israel prefer to style themselves—have constantly endeavoured to prove that their co-religionists in Eastern Europe, and in all oppressed countries, were very loyal subjects of their respective sovereigns, especially of Cæsar-Nicholas II, that indeed their love and affection for the house of Romanov was unbounded. Certainly it is a noble act to love one's enemies, but it is a form of nobility of which one can accuse but very few men. It is absurd to state as a fact that which our common sense tells us must be false. I therefore unhesitatingly affirm that it is not only inaccurate but a gross calumny to declare that Russian Jews took no share in the struggle of the Russian nation against their autocratic Government. A people

[1] Cf. L. Errera, *Les Juifs Russes*, Bruxelles, 1893, p. 145.

which for centuries has been systematically oppressed, tortured and massacred, must be either devoid of all human feelings, or else be possessed of truly angelic virtues, if it can, not only forgive, but love its tormentors. And the Jews are certainly neither dull brutes nor angels. They are quite human, for "Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Is he not troubled by the same diseases, healed by the same methods, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as is a Christian? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not take revenge?"

But with all respect to Shakespeare I do not by any means attribute the revolt of the Russian Jews against autocracy solely to the spirit of revenge, though this revenge-idea is upheld strongly by several writers upon Russo-Jewish affairs. Indeed, many seem to be of the opinion that the Russian pogroms turned the Jews into revolutionaries, flung them into the arms of democracy and revolution. This I emphatically deny, and my denial is based upon a thorough knowledge of Jewish history and Jewish psychology. The Jew does not call a cause just and right merely because it is *his* cause, but, because he believes it to be just and right, he makes it his cause and defends it with all the ardour of his soul and, upon its altar, sacrifices his material welfare.[1]

In his excellent work on the Empire of the Tsars, Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu seems to incline

[1] Many Jews are constantly claiming "Justice for the Jew," but my own humble cry is simply, "The Jew for Justice."

towards the revenge-idea. "Is it the Polish Jew," he wrote, "the Jew of Russia and Roumania, who is the artisan of innovation? Look at him. Was it he who could have pushed the world upon paths untrodden? Is it he who could have endangered the Austrian civilisation? No," says Leroy-Beaulieu, "it is the pogroms that have made the Jew an opponent of autocracy, of Tsardom, nothing else; but for them the Russian Jews would have shunned subversive movements and all struggles for democracy. 'Il est pour cela trop Juif, trop religieux, trop dévôt, trop traditionnel, trop conservateur en un mot.'"[1] Thus the revolutionary tendencies of the Jews in Russia are due only to the pogroms, to a spirit of revenge against autocracy and Tsardom, otherwise the religion and the conservative spirit of the Jews would have prevented them joining the ranks of democracy, the ranks of the pioneers of freedom. With these ideas of the famous French author I cannot agree.

Neither can I agree with M. Allemand, when he states that apart from the pogroms which stimulated the hatred of Tsardom amongst the Jews, it is the weakening of the religious spirit that has turned the sons of Israel into adherents of socialism and democratic ideals. "In the course of the nineteenth century the religious spirit weakened among the Jews. They ceased to consider the Talmud as their unique book. The Rabbi was no longer their only oracle. The Jews no longer looked upon their religion as a consolation; they therefore required a new faith."[2] This new faith

[1] Cf. Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, *Empire des Tsars*, Paris, p. 639.
[2] Cf. L. Allemand, *Les Souffrances des Juifs Russes*, Paris, 1907.

the Jew found in socialism. Thus M. Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu is a partisan of the theory of revenge, whilst M. Allemand upholds the idea of irreligion.

These theories of the eminent Christian writers, both so thoroughly, whole-heartedly sympathetic to the Jews, are, in my opinion, entirely wrong; they are based upon mistaken premises. The *Leitmotif* of Jewish action is never revenge, with all due respect to Shakespeare, but justice; whilst his religion has never prevented the Jew from joining the ranks of the fighters for freedom, equality and justice. These three principles are the very quintessence of the Jewish religion, of the Bible and the Talmud alike. It was not because Tsardom wronged *him* that the Jew was against autocracy, but because Tsardom wronged humanity. The real Jew, the Jew who is really penetrated by the true spirit of Judaism, is always on the side of the suffering and the oppressed; he has always been, and still is, an opponent of the principle of the divine right of autocrats and absolute monarchs, for the sovereign right of nations is his ideal. He is always—I am speaking of the real Jew, not of the Aryanised Jew—on the side of the proletariat and Labour as opposed to Capital, because Capital has made a slave of Labour. It makes no difference to the Jew—the Jew who is inspired by the teaching of the Prophets—whether this capitalist be Christian or Jewish. Now, in Russia, the Jews have been on the side of the enemies of Tsardom for various reasons, political, economic, religious and humanitarian. Let us first see which were, and are, their own personal claims to emancipation and full citizen rights. Could they expect any favour

from the rulers of the house of Holstein-Gottorp? The answer must certainly be in the negative.

The Russian Jews were justified in demanding emancipation in the dominions of the Tsar. When in the English Parliament Macaulay spoke in favour of the Bill to abolish the disabilities fettering the Jews in England, he pointed out to its opponents that there was nothing in the national character of the Jews that would unfit them for the highest duties of citizenship. "In the infancy of civilisation," said the noble orator, "when our island was as savage as New Guinea, when letters and the arts were still unknown to Athens, when scarcely a thatched hut stood on what was later the site of Rome, this contemned people had their fenced cities and cedar palaces, their splendid Temple, their fleets of merchant ships, their schools of sacred learning, their great statesmen and soldiers, their natural philosophers, their historians and their poets. What nation ever contended more manfully against overwhelming odds for its independence and religion? What nation ever, in its last agonies, gave such signal proofs of what may be accomplished by a brave despair? Let us open to them the door of the House of Commons. Let us open to them every career in which ability and energy can be displayed. Till we have done this, let us not presume to say that there is no genius among the countrymen of Isaiah, no heroism among the descendants of the Maccabees."

I hope that I shall be forgiven for the above long quotation, but those words apply equally as well to the Russian Jews as to their co-religionists of eighty years ago. But if it had been Macaulay's

task to raise his voice to-day in defence of the Russian Jews, he could have found much weightier arguments to support the motion. Macaulay could not say that the English Jews had been established in the country long before the Englishmen themselves; that they had fought the battles of Hastings and Agincourt! It is true that, according to William of Malmesbury, the Conqueror brought some Jews from Rouen to England, but, as is well known, all Jews were expelled from England during the reign of Edward I in 1290. And, as regards earlier times, there is not a shred of evidence that any Jews had resided in England previous to the Norman Conquest.

But it is not so in Russia. The Russian Jews are amongst the most ancient inhabitants of the Slavonic Empire. They were settled in the Crimea as far back as the third century B.C. In consequence of the economic and commercial expansion that followed the conquests of Alexander the Great in Asia, many Jews settled in the Greek towns, especially in the ports. Therefore it was somewhat ludicrous that the rulers of the house of Holstein-Gottorp looked down upon, and described as aliens and intruders, some of the most ancient inhabitants of the country. In the seventh century, a Finnish population, the Khazars, was converted to the Mosaic faith; the kingdom of the Khazars existed until the end of the tenth century, when it was destroyed by Sviatoslav, Prince of Kiev. The vanquished Khazars fled to the Crimea, where they intermingled with the Jewish communities established there. Thus there were Jews in Russia before the advent of Christianity, and certainly long before the Slavs adopted

the Christian teaching or the German Jews had immigrated into Poland. These ancient Jewish dwellers, before and after the conversion of the population to Christianity, were not only engaged in commercial pursuits, but exercised all the industries of the other inhabitants.

From an ancient chronicle relating to the invitation extended by the inhabitants of Kiev to Vladimir Monomachus to accept the throne then recently vacated by Sviatopolk, it is evident that the Jews took an active part in the wars waged by the various Slavonic princes. They were to be found in the different camps, taking arms for one or the other ruler. The famous Russo-Jewish orientalist Harkavy published some important statements, from which we gather that there were many Jews among the Cossacks when they began to organise themselves in the sixteenth century. Thus the Jews were then—as now—the brothers-in-arms of the Slavs among whom they dwelt. They shared their life and defended the common cause for several centuries. Slav and Jew fought side by side, undertook military expeditions, or defended the country against foreign invaders. The greatest proof that the Jews shared, with their Slavonic fellow-citizens, the hardships of war and took part in the strifes of the inhabitants of Moscovy, lies in the fact that they were to be found among the prisoners of war.

From a document quoted by a foremost authority on the subject, M. N. Gradovsky, and dated 1655, it is evident that under the reign of Tsar Alexis Mikhailovitsh, during the war with Poland, there were Jewish soldiers among the Lithuanian prisoners sent to Kaluga. None of these docu-

ments concerning the Jews of ancient Russia bear any trace of there having been any restrictive laws against them. They enjoyed equal civil and political rights with their fellow citizens, and it is worthy of note that during the period of the Mongol dominion their situation remained unchanged. The Jews of ancient Lithuania and Russia, like their co-religionists in Western Europe, although remaining faithful to their religion, were to all intents and purposes Slavs. They had assimilated themselves to such an extent that they spoke the language and bore Slavonic names.

"The Russian Slavs," writes Gradovsky, "had entered into relationship with the Jews long before the Slavs of Poland, and, being of a more tolerant disposition in religious matters, treasured them as their fellow citizens, whilst the Jews, on the other hand, saw no reason, in spite of their observance of the law of the Talmud, to keep aloof."

All was changed however with the accession of the Romanovs, especially when Poland was practically swallowed up by the Russian Empire. The Romanovs have always, with but few exceptions, followed a hostile policy with regard to the Jews. The Ukraine fell under the sway of Moscow during the reign of Tsar Fedor Alexeievitsh Romanov, and then the numerous Jews who lived there became the subjects of the Tsars. Although they had enjoyed equal rights with their fellow citizens under the rule of the Polish kings, they were at once treated as strangers and aliens by the Tsar of Moscow. Restrictive laws and measures against the Jews became the order of the day. Whilst the first rays of liberty and emancipation were tinting the dark sky of

mediaevalism, whilst a new day was slowly dawning upon the Europe of the eighteenth century, the Russian Tsars busily engaged themselves issuing ukases worthy of the darkest times of the ignorant Middle Ages. Whilst the Renaissance, the revival of classic learning, and the Reformation were slowly helping to dissolve the veil of the barbarian days, the veil woven by illusion, superstition, and fanaticism, whilst Western thought was gradually emancipating itself from the old ecclesiastical shackles, Tsardom vainly pursued the phantom of a unity of faith—the ancient dream of Rome and Byzantium. The final annexation of a portion of Poland in 1772 made a great number of Jews Russian subjects, henceforward to be treated as aliens and undesirables.

M. Gradovsky has endeavoured to prove that Catherine II granted the Jews equal rights with the other citizens of her Empire, but the Senate, in spite of the Imperial ukase, adopted restrictive measures against them. Gradovsky evidently does not like admitting that the friend of Diderot and D'Alembert could have been so unjust to millions of her subjects. An impartial study of history has, however, convinced me that it was Catherine herself who inaugurated an era of new persecutions against the Jews, an era of severe laws, of a policy which was followed by all her successors upon the Russian throne, excepting, perhaps, to some extent, Alexander II. The ukase that definitely fixed the zone of residence of the Jews in the Russian Empire was promulgated on June 24th, 1794.[1] Catherine, the

[1] Cf. Léon Allemand, *Les Souffrances des Juifs en Russie*, Paris, 1907, p. 49.

friend of Diderot and Voltaire, who had flirted with philosophy and literature, with the theories of the Encyclopædists and with themselves, with the men and their doctrines, became a fervent persecutor of the Jews in the interests of autocracy. And yet she pretended, writes Allemand,[1] that Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois* had inspired her projects for a constitution! But Catherine changed her would-be—it had never been very real with her—policy of tolerance as soon as the revolution broke out.

The French Revolution made this Imperial philosopher suddenly turn reactionary. The French Revolution that proclaimed *les droits de l'homme*, the Revolution that threatened the thrones of monarchs and autocrats, that opened wide the doors to democratic and republican principles: this revolution so disgusted her, autocrat that she was at heart, that she became the violent enemy of any principle of freedom and of all those who were, so to speak, the spirit of democracy, of justice, equality and freedom incarnate. The Revolution gave the Jews emancipation and freedom, declared them to be men and fellow citizens. The Jews had taken no part in the French upheaval collectively, but the Russian Empress was sufficiently well versed in history and philosophy to understand what a danger the Jews could be to autocracy or to absolute monarchy, to Imperialism and the famous *Raison d'Etat* policy upon which autocracy and bureaucracy have, and still are, basing their arbitrary and despotic measures, their secret diplomacies and their wars of conquest and ex-

[1] *l.c.*, p. 50.

pansion. The Jewish spirit, allowed to develop freely, could not but prove subversive of all these feudal and mediaeval doctrines. The Empress therefore decided that the Jewish spirit should be crushed; all Israel's revolutionary tendencies should be nipped in the bud.

Thus, in my opinion, Catherine II became a Jew-hater, not only because, as Allemand states, she did not wish to follow the liberal policy of revolutionary France, and in any way seem to approve of the principles of the Revolution,[1] but because she was astute enough to understand that the Jew emancipated would be even more dangerous to autocraey than the Jew oppressed. The revolutionary discontent of oppressed and enslaved Jews would only be the revolt of slaves, whilst the discontent of emancipated Jews, equal in rights to their fellow eitizens, would be the revolt of free men. A revolution made by men enjoying a certain amount of rights and freedom, is vastly more dangerous than a revolt of slaves, chiefly because it is not inspired solely by motives of envy and greed, but by an idea, by the principles of justice and equality.

"En résumé," says another author, "à un certain moment elle prit peur, et pour accomplir son métier d'Impératrice elle eut recours aux mésures repressives. Dès l'aurore de la révolution elle avait dit adieu aux idées de liberté et de tolerance, et elle avait inauguré un régime de réaction. Aussitôt qu'elle sentit le péril pour son Empire, elle redoubla de rigueur."[2] She knew that the revolution was coming slowly but surely.

[1] Cf. Allemand, p. 60.
[2] Ch. de., Larivière, *Catherine le Grand*, Paris, 1895, p. 186.

Well might she exclaim: "De pareils désordres sont impossible en Russie"; well might she rely upon the inertia of the masses, yet she felt that the revolutionary ideas were but latent in the land of her adoption, and that the throne she had usurped would, sooner or later, totter to its fall. Indeed, Vorontzov told her so in 1792. "La contagion sera universelle. Notre éloignement, nous garantira pour quelque temps; nous serons les derniers, mais nous serons aussi les victimes. Notre tour viendra, plus tard, à cause de notre éloignement, mais il viendra." [1] And like Vorontzov and Kotshoubey, Catherine understood that the French Revolution was not only French but would spread over the world. She knew, too, that the Russians rejoiced over the Revolution and loudly proclaimed in the streets of Petrograd that tyranny was now dead in France!

Catherine II therefore became a reactionary. She suppressed liberalism and Freemasonry in Russia. She sent Novikov to Schlüsselburg and exiled Radishtshev, and last, but not least, she inaugurated a new era of persecutions of the Jews: not of the race but of the spirit. She felt sure that the Jews, if they embraced Byzantine Christianity, would become more submissive to Cæsarism! And so all the Tsars believed; these ideas were philosophically explained by the late Pobiedonostzev. But whatever motive the Northern Semiramis had for her attitude towards the Jews, she undoubtedly inaugurated a policy of repression as far as they were concerned. From that time the Jews were massed in the towns of the Pale of Settlement, as in the mediaeval Ghettos,

[1] Cf. Larivière, *l.c.*, p. 190.



CATHERINE II AT THE TIME OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

and all the restrictive laws passed against the Jews by the Tsars during the nineteenth century were based upon the ukase of Catherine. The life of the Jews of Russia henceforth was a veritable inferno. Prince Demidov San Donato has well summed up their situation in the following lines:

"They are placed on a footing of equality with the other subjects of the Tsar as far as taxes and duties are concerned, but are considered as aliens with regard to civil and political rights. They have all the burdens and responsibilities of the commonwealth, but they neither share the privileges nor do they enjoy the same protection of the law as their fellow citizens."

For long the Jews of Russia looked to Western Europe and their co-religionists to help them. They hoped that succour would come from them. They had evidently quite lost the sense of reality, of topographical orientation, were merely convinced that the sun of liberty would rise in the West instead of the East. But the hopes of Russian Jewry in this respect were frustrated. Neither Western Europe, nor Western Jewry, in spite of efforts made by those who were not Zionists, for these practically impeded emancipation, brought any deliverance. In an able article that serves as preface to M. Semenoff's book on the pogroms, Mr. Lucien Wolf blames the attitude of the Governments of Europe, and declares that their attitude of complaisance made the pogroms and oppression possible, and that their "blunted moral sense has been a substantial encouragement and help to these highly-placed massacre-mongers." Far be it from me to pose as the advocate of the very elastic moral conscience of Europe. Its

moral indignation can so easily slip into tactful passivity and a policy of *laissez-faire.*

The great indignation of Europe over the Congo atrocities will be remembered by many; the pitiful tales of the cruelties practised created an atmosphere akin to that which animated the days of the Crusades. The number of people ready to play Peter of Amiens was legion, and, finally, the Congo atrocities proved too heavy a burden for the European conscience. Yet when the Russian moujiks, vodka-mad, committed dastardly crimes and indescribable outrages, when the Cossacks, in the name of the Tsar, let loose the tide of brutality upon innocent men, women and children, Europe merely replied that she had no right to interfere in the internal affairs of a friendly Power! And when a few quixotic members of the House of Commons spoke against a tyrannical Government, they were told to recollect themselves, were turned out of the Legislative Assembly and advised to give vent to their feelings in Trafalgar Square or Hyde Park among the socialists, itinerant preachers, religious cranks and suffragettes. How, indeed, does the honour of young Russian girls, the misery of cultured men slaving under the knout and tortured in Siberia, and in narrow cells, compare with that of the negroes? Government could not interfere in the one instance—it would have been *mauvais ton*—but in the other, it was a moral duty, especially since the negroes were African, for Nurse Europe looks upon herself as justified in interfering in all African affairs. Long ago we came to the conclusion that the European Powers have a "Black and White" political conscience—that is, one for the white races and one for the black

ones. The white men in the Empire of the Tsar, or in Armenia, were supposed to be competent to take care of themselves, but matters are different where negroes are concerned; they cannot. But to-day the political conscience seems to have awakened to the needs of both races.

Yet if Europe was guilty, the Jews themselves were not free of blame. Yes, the Jews themselves, not so much, perhaps, those who yearned to be saved as those who played the saviours. The Russian Jews, the majority of them in any case, knew exactly what they wanted; they showed it by their actions; they expressed it in unmistakable words. They demanded the abolition of all restrictive laws; they claimed equal rights with their fellow-citizens, and they knew that as soon as Russia became a free country they would, sooner or later, obtain their emancipation. Therefore they fought, in self-defence, against the autocratic and bureaucratic régime.

When it was bruited that Bulygin wished to deprive the Jews of the right of sending representatives to the First Duma, the Jews raised a vehement protest. They did more; they erected barricades. They protested and, bleeding from a thousand wounds, they fought for liberty. And if I may be allowed to tell the truth without offending Western European Jews, I shall go so far as to state that the Russian Jews have fought much more ardently for their emancipation, and certainly made greater sacrifices, than did their more fortunate co-religionists in either France or England. French Jews towards the end of the eighteenth century had to meet the slight opposition of a Republican Government which, in itself,

was obliged to subscribe to the principles of equality. Moreover, the Jews had great defenders, such as Abbé Grégoire and Mirabeau. The English Jews, who had a Macaulay to champion them, had only to fight with an assembly of English gentlemen, and, besides, were sure of the support of the benevolent rulers of the House of Windsor, though the bluff sailor King William seems to have been antagonistic to the abolition of Jewish disabilities.

But it was far otherwise in Russia. There were but few Macaulays, no Abbé Grégoires, and if a Herzenstein, a Kerensky, a Tshekheidze, a Milyoukov raised their voices, they were either silenced by murderous shots or cried in the wilderness. Besides, the Romanovs were traditional enemies of the Jews. Alexis Mikhailovitsh, the second ruler of the house of Romanov, refused the request of the King of Poland that his Jewish subjects should be allowed to trade in Russia. And again, in 1749, Elizabeth Petrovna, "la Catin du Nord," as Frederick II called her, the libertine daughter of Peter the Great, whose debaucheries are thoroughly known, in a fit of pious horror expelled her physician Sanchez when she discovered that he was a Jew. This same Imperial lady refused to grant any privileges to her Jewish subjects, even though they would increase the revenues of the State. "I refuse to derive any benefit from the enemies of Christ," replied the daughter of the Livonian servant, Catherine I. And as for Catherine II, who, as some maintain, was the daughter of Frederick II, we have seen that she inaugurated a new era of persecution of the Russian Jews.

This hostility against the Jews was also in-

dulged in by Nicholas I, Alexander III and Nicholas II. The obstacles which the Russian Jews had to overcome were greater and more insurmountable than those against which the Western Jews had to fight. The emancipation of the latter was simply the logical sequence of the general principle of equality of all the citizens before the law. Western Jews obtained their rights simply because they were lucky enough to be living under the rule of humane kings and in the midst of populations possessed by a sense of justice. The Russian Jews, on the contrary, were living among an oppressed people.

Certainly, judging by their efforts, the Russian Jews have deserved freedom more than their more fortunate Western brethren. The number of Russian Jews who lost their lives in the struggle for liberty, nay, even of those who fell on the barricades of Lodz, is far greater than that of all the martyrs who fell on the barricades of Europe. If liberty is bought with blood, then the Russian Jews long ago paid their price in full.

The aims of Russian Jewry were quite clear and defined: to settle the Jewish question in Russia itself. But, unfortunately, the curse of the oppressed is always the inconceivably large number of their would-be saviours. It is really astonishing how numerous these saviours become. The streets of Jacob and the lanes of Israel are full of them. One finds them in the East and one finds them in the West; they dwell in Brick Lane and they reside in Park Lane. Brick Lane shrieked and went into hysterics whenever a calamity occurred, whilst Park Lane Jewry shivered in its patent-leather boots and—ultimately—paid the expenses.

But both the East and the West had, and still have, one thing in common: that they both committed the same errors, whether in sheer ignorance or obstinacy, one cannot tell.

All these would-be saviours endeavoured to settle the Jewish question in their own way without in the least troubling themselves to consult those whom it certainly most concerned: the suffering Jewish masses in Russia. These saviours of the Jews also scorned the idea of saving individuals when the opportunity offered. "What are single individuals? They do not count. We want to save the millions," they cried, and the natural result was that whilst the philanthropists were discussing and scheming, and also plotting and fighting among themselves, the masses were left to themselves, and finally, growing weary of waiting, decided to help themselves. It is, indeed, almost inconceivable that, though so much time and energy was spent by influential friends of the Russian Jews in the West in an endeavour to find a solution of the Jewish question by advocating this or that scheme, practically nothing was done to bring influence to bear upon the settlement of the Jewish problem in Russia itself. That the financiers of Europe could have influenced the Government of the Tsar I have never had any doubt. Such was the opinion of Stepniak and of many leaders of the liberal movement in Russia. As a rule, however, the Jewish financiers merely replied that they did not control the money-markets of the world to the extent that is usually imagined, but surely, where there is a will, there is a way!

This reminds me of an incident that happened more than half a century ago. Alexander Herzen

was compelled, as we have seen, to leave Russia. He fled to England, where he started his paper *The Bell.* Herzen, however, was a rich man, and before going into exile he had converted his property into State bonds. The Russian Government knew the numbers of Herzen's bonds, so when they were presented for payment, after Herzen's arrival in London, Nicholas I, in the hope of crushing his enemy, gave orders that the State Bank of St. Petersburg should refuse payment. The bank naturally obeyed, but, fortunately for Herzen, he found a champion in the elder Rothschild, who informed the Tsar that as Herzen's bonds were as good as any other Russian bonds, he was compelled to conclude the insolvency of the Russian Government. Should the bonds not be paid immediately, he would at once declare the Tsar bankrupt on all the European money-markets. Nicholas I was beaten; he put his pride in his pocket and paid. Herzen himself related this story in *The Bell,* under the title of "King Rothschild and Emperor Nicholas I."

There were plenty of kings in the money-markets of the world, who, if they had but combined and concentrated their efforts, could have forced Nicholas II to waken to a sense of justice. But they did not. *Tant pis.* Now, the Russian Jews have obtained their emancipation by their own efforts. They have fought heroically for their liberty and New Russia will not forget their sufferings or their sacrifices under the old régime; it will not forget that the Russian Jews have fought with courage and perseverance for the liberation of Russia from the yoke of tyranny and oppression. They have suffered exile and prison, soli-

tary. confinement, corporal punishment, Siberia, the mines, the knout and the nagayka of the Cossacks, but their revolutionary spirit could not be crushed. They fought for their very lives. Yet they simply asked to be treated as their co-religionists in other countries—as human beings—and to be permitted to enjoy the protection of the same laws as their fellow citizens. They were quite ready to obey those laws, to pay the taxes, to do their full civic duty, to be faithful sons of the fatherland, did it but grant them the rights of children; the child, beaten and tortured, can scarcely be expected to love its heartless step-mother or to wish her long life!

Even a glance at the history of the Liberal movement in Russia will convince any one that the struggle of the Jews, not only for their own emancipation, but also for the freedom of Russia and the Russian moujik, has been a very fierce and bitter one. The annals of the fortresses of St. Peter and St. Paul and of Schluesselburg, the Russian bastilles, contain many names of Jewish martyrs who died for the sake of freedom. And although Jewish revolutionaries were more heavily punished than their orthodox colleagues, their spirit was never daunted. "I have never heard," wrote Stepniak, "that such punishment had produced any impression upon the Jews, and now, as before, there are many among them who are quite willing to give up their all for the better future and freedom of their country."[1]

It is no exaggeration to say that the small, even insignificant, amount of freedom obtained by the Russian Liberals in 1905 and 1906 was largely due to the efforts of the Jews.

Their blood has saturated the Russian soil, from which, like the soldiers of Cadmus, the avengers and champions of liberty have come forth, armed and booted.

When the Constitutional Democratic Party was dreaming of a régime somewhat similar to that of the United States or Great Britain, the Liberals decided that the abolition of all class privileges and prerogatives, the emancipation of all the citizens dwelling in the dominions of the Tsar, was their first and most sacred duty. But even in the palmy days of the First Duma the landed gentry were organised to oppose any measures that tended to remove Jewish disabilities. And the peasants who were willing to vote for the abolition of the restrictive laws against the Jews, in so far as trade and commerce were concerned, were resolutely decided to oppose vehemently the admission of Jews to civil or State service. They could not reconcile themselves to the prospect of a Jew becoming a *Tshinovnik* and ruling over Christian souls. But need we be astonished at the prejudices inculcated in the minds of the ignorant, uneducated Russian moujik by the agents of Tsardom? The objections raised in the English Parliament against the abolition of Jewish disabilities were very similar. Members of the House of Commons who would indignantly have repudiated the thought of oppressing the Jews, could not reconcile themselves to the idea of their possessing political power in England. And what about the hue and cry raised by the Anti-Semitic press in modern England, during a war of liberation, a war for right and justice, at the appointment of a Jew as Secretary for India? But nevertheless

the Russian Jews still continued their fight against tyranny.

In the great struggle which the Russian people have fought against Tsardom, against autocracy, against the descendants of that "crétin alcoholique Pierre III," German Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, the Jews have taken an active part. "The heroism," says a writer in *La Revue*—who adds, by the way, that he is not himself a Jew—"which the Jews have manifested in this gigantic struggle calls to mind their formidable resistance to the Roman Empire. They have once more shown to the world that the spirit of sacrifice, the courage and ingenuity, which characterised their fight against Titus have not died out of the Jewish soul." [1] They have once more revealed themselves in the supreme fight for preservation. "Russia," continues the writer of the article, "will owe the greatest part of her freedom to the Jews. Without them the Liberals would never have been able to obtain a victory."

The heroism of the members of the Bund not only stupefied the reactionaries, but also served as a model to the fighters for freedom, the pioneers of the Russian Revolution. There was no political organisation in the vast Empire that was not influenced by Jews or directed by them. The Social Democratic, the Socialist Revolutionary Parties, the Polish Socialist Party, all counted Jews among their leaders. Plehve was, perhaps, right when he said that the struggle for political emancipation in Russia and the Jewish question were practically identical.[2] The "Bund," or

[1] Cf. *La Revue*, January 1906, p. 31.
[2] Cf. Ular, *La Révolution Russe*, Paris, p. 290.

General Union of the Jewish working men was founded in 1897. It is a political and economic association of the Jewish proletariat, "at first averse to all national distinctions, but gradually impregnated with Jewish national sentiment."[1] It made active propaganda in Yiddish, published numerous pamphlets and such organs as *The Jewish Working-man, The Voice of the Working-men.*

During the reign of Alexander II the Jews enjoyed certain favours, but, neverthless, they took part in the movement of liberation. The Jewish intelligenzia assimilated itself with the Russian intelligenzia during the seventies, just as the Jewish proletariat was destined to make common cause with the Russian proletariat later on. Thus, the revolutionary movement—that is, the movement for freedom and equality—has counted many Jews among its adherents for the last forty years. The names of Zoundelevitsh, Mlodetsky, Viteniberg, Kogan-Bernstein, and above all, Gershouni, are well known and honoured among the pioneers of freedom.[2]

The Bund has organised numerous strikes in Russia: between 1897 and 1900 alone, there were 312 strikes at which over 27,890 working men took part.[3] When I say that the Bund is a proletarian or labour organisation, it must not be imagined that only manual labourers belong to it. I have already pointed out that there are two proletariates, the manual and the intellectual,

[1] L. Wolf, *Edinburgh Review*, July 1917, p. 309.
[2] Cf. E. Semenoff, *Une page de la contre-révolution*, Paris, 1908, p. 36.
[3] Cf. Ebérlin, *Les Juifs Russes*, p. 43.

and perhaps of the two the latter has suffered, and is suffering, more than the former. This latter proletariat may be called "La misère en habit noir." Many members of the Bund belong to the intellectual proletariat. The members of the Bund have never hesitated to show an example of self-sacrifice to the fighters for freedom. They indeed deserve the appellation of pioneers of the Russian Revolution. They have suffered and bled upon the altar of Russian freedom, and have fought heroically for their Jewish brethren. They were sent to prison, the mines and Siberia; indeed, the victims of this revolutionary party are proportionately greater than those of other social-democratic parties. The Jewish revolutionaries, holocausts devoured by Moloch Tsardom, are legion; they have written with their heart's blood the history of the Russian struggle for freedom. The number of the Bundists arrested, imprisoned and deported amounted to 1,000 during the years 1897–1900, and to 2,180 between 1901 and 1903. Altogether, from March 1903 to November 1904, 384 politicals passed through the prison of Alexandrovskane. The following is the per centage of these prisoners according to their nationality: 53·9 per cent. Jews, 26·4 per cent. Russians, 10·4 per cent. Poles, 5·9 per cent. Georgians, 1·5. per cent. Esthonians, Letts and Lithuanians, and 1·9 per cent. other nationalities.

As for the women, 64·3 per cent, were Jewesses.[1] Plehve maintained that 80 per cent. of the revolutionaries in Russia were Jews.

[1] Cf. Eberlin, *l.c.*, p. 47; J. Melnik, *Russen über Russland*, Frankfort, 1916, pp. 585–586.

CHAPTER XII

ISRAEL'S CRY FOR JUSTICE

THE Jews of Russia were also opposed to autocracy for religious reasons. Autocracy meant unity of faith, the triumph of the Orthodox Church at the expense of all other religions and beliefs. Liberty of conscience is one of the tenets of Judaism. Proselytism has never been the appanage of the Jew. To save the soul of man by fire and sword, by crucifying his body, by burning it on the stake or torturing it in the subterranean vaults of a cruel Inquisition, has been the policy of Catholicism, but never of Judaism, in which it is at one with Protestantism as distinguished from Missionarism. The Jews were thus opposed to Russian autocracy, which wanted to convert them to the orthodox faith by force. Tsardom offered them, if not the liberty of the West, a liberty which even its orthodox subjects did not possess, at least equality with all the other slaves of the vast Empire. It was still slavery but a gilded slavery—a social state preferable to that which was their lot for centuries. And what were the conditions of Tsardom? Simply that Israel should abandon its religion and its God and embrace the faith of Byzantium. Israel refused; it preferred to cling to its ancient beliefs, thus

proving that without religion the Jewish nation has no *raison d'être* and simply ceases to exist.

In other words, the existence of Israel, considered as a separate national unit, is intimately connected with religion, which is its fundamental principle. A Jew who is not a nationalist is still a Jew, but a Jewish nationalist who has embraced another religion, or who has no religion at all, who believes neither in God nor in the devil, is no longer a Jew; and when he calls himself a Jewish nationalist, he is merely playing with words, unaware of the illogism into which such an attitude must lead him. The theory of Jewish nationalism, independently of religion, is based upon wrong premises and is utterly illogical. Had all the Jews in Russia yielded to the temptations of State and Church, and embraced Christianity in the fond hope that nevertheless they would be a separate national unity, there would have been no Jews to-day in Russia, and not only would the so-called Jewish question have disappeared long ago, but there would have been no so-called Jewish nationalistic tendencies nowadays.

Thus the Jews of Russia have truly been among the pioneers of the Russian Revolution and shared with their fellow citizens their anxiety to shake off the yoke of Tsardom. They knew full well that a Republic, or even a Constitutional Monarchy, could not but proclaim the principle of "droits de l'homme et du citoyen," which meant the emancipation of all the inhabitants of the commonwealth, irrespective of race and religion. I venture, however, to affirm, most emphatically, that even had the Jews enjoyed equal rights in Russia and

not been submitted to special exclusive laws, they would nevertheless have furnished a vast contingent to the revolutionary forces. This ethnic or religious group—I am not now discussing the question whether the Jews are a nation or a religious community—could not but be an opponent of Tsardom and autocracy. It was bound to be an inveterate enemy of the policy of Byzantium that incarnated the spirit of Imperialism, a policy of conquest and expansion, and was opposed to both the ideals of the principle of nationality and to the universalism and internationalism of the Prophets. For, apart from the political, religious and economic causes which threw the Jews of Russia into the arms of the Revolution and made thousands of them, men and women, sacrifice their lives upon the altar of liberty, face prison, exile, Schluesselburg, solitary confinement, Siberia, the mines and death, there were other reasons for their attitude. They are to be found in the revolutionary spirit inherent in the Jew. When I say revolutionary spirit, I mean the spirit that thirsts for liberty and independence as it is compatible with truth, right, justice and equality. The cry for justice and equality uttered by the Prophets still resounds in the ears of the Jew wherever he is. It was the sentiment of justice and equality which gave birth to Christianity in the midst of Judaism.

Throughout history the spirit of the Jew has always been revolutionary and subversive, but subversive with the purpose of building upon the ruins. It is progressive and evolutionary; even in its first national establishment it contained the seeds of universalism which were destined to

blossom forth and bear fruit in the ages to come. Onwards, ever onwards, is the motto of the Jewish spirit. The Jew, therefore, who desires a return to the past, who ignores the laws of evolution and progress, and the steps his own race has made in advance of other nations by throwing off the shackles of narrow nationalism in the great march towards the true goal of humanity, when all men will be brothers, when there will be no difference between classes, tribes, nations and peoples—in a word, the march towards the great and glorious ideal of a "confraternity of men" instead of the empty, meaningless and contradictory conception of a "Society of Nations"—that Jew is unfaithful to the spirit of Judaism. The Jewish spirit has always yearned for justice, truth and equality: these are the fundamental principles of Israel. They are embodied in the cry that rings through the words of the Prophets, that was echoed by the first teachers of Christianity. It was a protest, a revolt against iniquity and inequality. The first Christians were therefore the good Jews—or the good Jews were the first Christians. And even to-day, if one analysed religious sentiments closely, one might find that the Jews and not the Catholics were the people who most tenaciously cling to Christian morals.

There was therefore practically no difference between the real Jews—Jews inspired by the sentiments of justice and equity, and a spirit of revolt against iniquity, political, social or economic—and the first Christians. But when Christianity, under the influence of Greek and Roman thought, despairing of ever securing political and social equality in the world, consoled its followers with



MME WOLKENSTEIN.



GREGORY GERSHOUNI.

"a kingdom to come" where all would be equal, the Jews and Christians parted ways. It has been pointed out that because the Jew did not entertain the belief in future compensation (he only accepted the theory of immortality at a much later date, when he came under the influence of Parsism) he could not submit to the misfortunes of life. Whilst, therefore, the peoples and nations who believed in a "Beyond," who found consolation in the sweet chimera of compensation, of reward and punishment after life, of heaven and hell, bowed their heads and resigned themselves to the misfortunes of earthly life, to illness and poverty, the Jew alone, averse both to the fatalism of the Moslem and to the spirit of resignation of the Christian, replied by revolt.

Thus these inveterate idealists who conceived the idea of one God, became the most determined sensualists.[1] "It was their conception of life and death that furnished the Jews with their revolutionary spirit." These remarks of my late lamented friend seem to me to be only partially correct. One need not be a disbeliever in a future life, in the immortality of the soul, to be an ardent partisan of justice and equality. If it were so, it would logically follow that only those who do not accept the immortality of the soul, the existence of a "Beyond," could be inspired by the spirit of revolution, could yearn for justice and social equality, and that all those who proclaim themselves as being inspired by these ideals must all be atheists and materialists who look upon the Beyond as a product of the imagination, a superstition, or, if they still profess to believe in

[1] *Cf.* B. Lazare, *Antisemitisme, l.c.*

it, are simply hypocrites and liars! But it would also follow that the only logical, honest Christians are the anchorites who despise life, and that the true believer in the Beyond, in after reward and punishment, should court suffering and oppression so as to obtain a larger share of eternal bliss. The logical position of humanity would then be this: All those who are reformers, social reformers, innovators, apostles of justice and equality, who are anxious for the amelioration of the suffering classes, do not believe in a world to come, in God or in the devil; and all those who do not believe in a next world, in a Beyond, must be inspired by a spirit of justice and equality. Furthermore, all those who profess to be religious and yet pretend to be working for the alleviation of suffering are hypocrites and liars.

In reality, however, the case is quite different. We may be firmly convinced of the eternal existence of the soul, of reward and punishment, of heaven and hell, but we may also feel that no reward in a world to come can be adequate compensation for suffering here below. Must one really conclude that because some men, who do not believe in a Beyond, are anxious to see justice upon the earth, that all those who are partisans of justice in this world do not believe in a Beyond? Genius, for instance, may be inclined to madness, but it does not necessarily follow that an imbecile is the only sane and reasonable person! No; I maintain that justice and social equality have always been the ideals of the Jew, whether he believed in a world to come, in a Beyond or no. What the Jews could not accept from Christianity, as taught, not by the Saviour,

but by the Roman Church, was to submit to slavery and oppression, to allow the usurpers, the momentary victors in the battle for political and economic power, to remain in undisturbed possession of their unjust and dishonestly acquired wealth and dominance, be it political, social or economic. From Isaiah down to Lassalle, the cry for justice and equality has been reiterated by the Jews, but it has always been *universal* justice, for the cry of a collectivity for justice for itself, is, in reality, not free from selfishness.

"To hasten the coming of real justice upon earth, to distribute to every one the greatest possible sum of well-being in this world," such is part of the mission of Israel. "This idea," writes a Christian author who cannot be accused of too great a sympathy for the Jews, "was, if not unknown to the old Aryan societies, at least placed on a secondary plane." [1] It seemed to the Aryan quite just and natural that the powerful and the rich should rule over the poor and the weak. Every revolution of the weak and oppressed was quelled by the mighty, the usurpers of power and wealth. And even the best among the Aryans, the philosophers and thinkers, consoled the slaves, the proletarians, with the hope of a future life where things would be different. Such a philosophy could not satisfy the Jew. It is in this world that "this arch-type of a revolutionary" wanted to see justice reign. Long before they had been formulated in French, the principles of *Droits de l'homme* had been announced in Hebrew.[2]

It has further been maintained that the Jew,

[1] Cf. Muret, *L'Esprit Juif*, Paris, 1901, p. 46.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

being an individualist, is unable to sacrifice himself for the collectivity. "The Jew," writes Sombart, "is politically an individualist. He is the born representative of a liberal conception." [1] But the individualism of the Jew, which I recognise and admit, does not exclude a readiness to fight for a collectivity—for a collective ideal, as long as that ideal tends to procure happiness for *all* the individuals, without exceptions, that constitute the collectivity.

Now let us see what is a collective ideal? A collectivity is an agglomeration of individuals, some of whom are happy, mighty, rich and powerful, whilst others are unhappy and drag the chains of misery, poverty and slavery about with them. If men were therefore to fight and die for the conservation of such a state of affairs, they would no longer be fighting for a collectivity but for certain individuals, for a privileged class. This the Jew may refuse to do. He will fight and die, willingly, for an amelioration, for a social change, for the realization of a State in which *all* the individuals shall enjoy equal rights and happiness. Only such a society, or a collectivity based upon such principles—*i.e.* in which all the individuals are happy—may be called a truly collective ideal, and for such a collective ideal the Jew has never refused to fight and to die, for it is in accordance with his inherent individualism.

Individualism is opposed to the sacrifice of some individuals for the benefit of other individuals who style themselves a collectivity, but it is never opposed to the sacrifice of one indi-

[1] Cf. W. Sombart, *Die Juden u. das Wirtschaftsleben*, Berlin, 1911, p. 318.

vidual for a collectivity in which *all* individuals hold equal rights, powers and privileges. In other words, the Jew has never refused to fight and to die for a collective ideal, truly collective in so far as it represented the happiness of all individuals constituting the collectivity in question. Thus, Jewish individualism does not exclude sacrifice for a collectivity of individuals in which all are equal. The Jew has fought and died, and will continue to do, for social amelioration, but not for social *status quo*.

Judaism told its followers that man is a slave of God but not a slave of slaves; *i.e.* that all men should be equal. The leader should, at the utmost, be intellectually superior, a man of science and erudition, but not he who has been placed by chance of birth or blind hazard upon the top of the social ladder. Authority based upon such principles is distasteful to the Jew and to the Jewish spirit. The old State ideal of the Jews, when they had a political state, was therefore anarcho-theocratic.[1] Catholicism and autocracy, therefore, which based their claims upon divine right, or right of birth, could never appeal to the Jews. Judaism, being based upon the principle of individualism, as is abundantly shown in the Bible and the Talmud, could not but be opposed to autocracy, justifying all its laws of oppression by the idea of *Raison d'Etat*.

Individualism means that the interests of the individual should not at any moment be sacrificed for the collectivity, since the collectivity, being an aggregation of individuals, loses its *raison d'être*, once the rights of the single individual are ignored.

[1] Cf. Muret, *l.c.*, pp. 34, 35.

The *Raison d'Etat* principle is diametrically opposed to it, for it never hesitates to sacrifice the individual to this phantom idea, an idea that at the best is only advantageous to the governing classes, who, *à la* Louis XIV, could always, at all epochs and in all countries, exclaim: "L'Etat, c'est nous." *Raison d'Etat*, therefore, simply means the sacrifice of individuals that belong to the oppressed classes for the benefit of the ruling classes. The Russian Jews have thus been among the principal opponents of Tsardom, and have swelled the ranks of the pioneers of the Revolution, for political, religious, economic and psychological reasons.

One of the best proofs that the Russian Jews have not fought in the ranks of the pioneers of the Revolution solely for their own benefit, but for Russia, their country, may have been found in the strenuous opposition of Jews of all shades of opinion to the formation of a Jewish regiment in Great Britain. This regiment, we were told, was to be used for a specifically Jewish purpose. But thousands of Russian Jews returned "home," went to Russia to serve in the Russian army and to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Slavs for the Russian Revolution and freedom and against German militarism. And those who had remained in Great Britain replied: "We are fighting not as Jews but as Englishmen or Russians. Your cause is our cause, and your country is our country." One cannot but applaud such sentiments! It is not for me to criticise the decision of the War Office, but I venture to say that from a Jewish point of view the idea of a Jewish regiment for "a specifically Jewish purpose" is ridiculous.

That is the reason why both the plan and its realisation have been hailed and applauded by the entire anti-semitic press. It is clear to any impartial observer that the anti-semitic scribblers are already "rubbing their hands" anticipating excellent copy.

At the present moment, however, I am concerned with the idea of a Jewish regiment only in so far as it affects the sentiments of Russian Jews and their activity as pioneers of the Russian Revolution. As such, it was only logical that they should have opposed the realisation of the plan with all the power at their disposal. "I cannot imagine," wrote an old volunteer,[1] "the Government conscripting, say, a unit of Sinn Feiners and naming it the 'Catholic Regiment' without a protest being raised." "We are fighting the German nation," wrote another correspondent. "The question is a national, not a religious one."[2]

"Our religion and descent," wrote a third eminent correspondent, "are no concern of the State."[3] It is evident that a soldier fighting in the ranks of the Allies can only be asked to what nationality he belongs, of which State he is a citizen, but not which are his metaphysical ideas about God, or in which place he is in the habit of worshipping the Deity. He may pray in English or in Hebrew, at the top of Mont Blanc or on the waves of the ocean, in the Synagogues at Salonica or in the Cathedral of Rheims. "Wherever you call me," says the God of Israel, "I shall hear you." The idea of a Jewish regiment, I say it most emphatically, for "a specifically

[1] Cf. *Jewish Chronicle*, August 24th, 1917, p. 15.
[2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Jewish purpose," viz. the conquest of Palestine, is a misrepresentation of Jewish ideals, of Jewish sentiments.

The question of enlisting the non-naturalised Russian Jews living in Great Britain or transporting them to Russia agitated public opinion and led to much discussion and many protests. "Fair-play" is the appanage of the Briton. Now let me say at the outset that, in my opinion, it is only right that every man of military age and medically fit should do his duty by swelling the ranks of those who are fighting a desperate foe and defending the cause of justice. This is so evident that it requires no further elucidation or *pièces justificatives*.

The British Government had a perfect ethical right thus to speak to the non-naturalised Russian Jews in England: "Now that we have introduced conscription, you, strangers at our gates, must quickly make up your minds: Join the British army—and by doing so you, *eo ipso*, become British subjects, sharing all the duties but also all the privileges of the natural-born Briton. If you prefer, however, to keep your Russian nationality, and yet refuse to return to your native land to perform your military duties there, we must consider you as military deserters of an allied nation. Some years ago we gave you an asylum on our hospitable shores, but, alas, circumstances have changed, and we can no longer harbour in our midst military deserters of a friendly Power at war with our common foe. You must leave our shores and emigrate wherever you like. You trusted us when you came here years ago, and we Britons never retract even a tacit promise,

and even if there be no vestige of a scrap of paper. We have no intention of keeping you like mice in a trap. Join, therefore, the British army as British subjects, or leave Great Britain, going wherever you like, to Russia or elsewhere, *c'est votre affaire.*"

However sad are the circumstances necessitating such a step—no *juris-consult* could have questioned the legal and ethical right of the British Government to speak thus. To enlist, however, these young men in the British army without at once granting them British citizenship was illogical; to have transported them to Russia where, as yet, they had no rights, except those of dying for their native land, would have been unethical. In the meantime the Revolution had broken out, and the Russian Jews were ready to fight in the Russian or in the British army, either as Britishers or as Russians.

Many Zionists, however, in appealing to these Jews to enlist had strengthened their appeal by the argument that in so doing the recruits would be helping the cause of Israel, lend strength to the claims of Jewry to emancipation or an autonomous state. Now it seems to me that there is a vast difference between sacrificing *our own* lives on the altar of duty, and telling our fellow men to give *their* lives for a great cause, so that over their bodies we may lead the remaining to the goal. Moses himself never saw the promised land; he died in the desert, and only caught a glimpse of Palestine from the heights of Pisgah. Leaders of great movements usually fall on the roadway. What these Zionists leaders were really aiming at was nothing less than buying Jewish emancipation, or

a Jewish autonomous state, and paying for these boons with the lives of a few thousands of their own race. I confess that the gifts would be cheap at the price; and just because they would be cheap, I am afraid that the price would be considered inadequate. If the price to be paid for Jewish emancipation and a Jewish autonomous state are the lives of so many Jews, then I venture to think the price has already been paid, a thousandfold, long ago!

But many Jews were in favour of the idea of a few Jewish self-seekers, saviours of Israel, that the 15,000 or 20,000 Russian Jews in England should be enlisted, formed into battalions, and sent to Egypt to fight for and conquer Palestine. The idea is not a new one; and even if it were possible to gather all the Jewish soldiers from all over the world together and send them as a huge army to fight the Turk and conquer Palestine, I would not oppose it, but the so-called Zionist leaders seem to have forgotten one important factor; viz. that the Jews are *not* gathered together in one army, but are scattered and serving in all the belligerent armies. It is a tragic fact, but a fact none the less, and which in their ardour these Zionist leaders seem to forget.

Now suppose that 15,000 or 20,000 Jews are sent out by the Allies—by England, to be precise—to fight in Palestine, what is to prevent the enemy in his diabolical cunning, what is to prevent the modern Caligula from picking out a huge army of Jews, preferably Zionists, and sending them, headed by some German Zionist leaders, with the Rabbi of Strasburg as chaplain, to fight on the soil of Palestine against the Jewish battalions sent out

by Great Britain or France? The mind positively freezes at the thought of such an event, but it is quite within the range of possibility. '*Did not the Germans send Bulgarian detachments against Russia?* They might equally well send Jews to fight Jews on the soil of Palestine. It would be a devilish device, a tragedy too terrible to contemplate, but one which may be expected from those who committed such unspeakable atrocities in Flanders and Northern France. What is to prevent the enemy from sending the Chief Rabbi of Turkey, M. Naoum, to fire and stimulate the ardour of *their* Jewish battalions?

I am, of course, aware that there are many Zionists steeped in Realpolitik, who readily scoff at the Jewish spirit, the ancient religious superstition; but then, the very restoration of the Jews to Palestine is considered a dream and a superstition by many, and the superstition of politics has no right to scoff at the superstition of faith. The chasm yawning between the religious Jewish spirit and a conquest of Palestine by the Jews, as a separate army, is too vast to be overbridged. The idea of a conquest of Palestine, by the Jews, is neither Jewish nor Christian. It is a German and pagan doctrine, based upon the Nietzscheism of the conquering blonde beast.

It was Germany who started this war with a view to annexation—not the Allies. The latter are fighting not for new lands and territories, but for right and justice. France never abandoned her claim to Alsace-Lorraine, Italy never gave up Trieste; but neither France nor Italy wanted a war, and would never have started it, had it not been forced upon them by Germany. But even

if Christians sometimes forget the teaching of the Saviour, there is no reason why Zionists should ignore the spirit of Judaism, the teaching of the Prophets which superseded the book of Joshua. And, after all, the walls of Jericho did not fall by heavy artillery but at the blast of the horn!

"Germany," says Mr. Zangwill rightly, "has challenged the world on the lower plane of matter; she is trying to assert herself in fire and is writing her edicts in blood. But fire burns down and blood dries up and fades, and the only durable influence is the power of the spirit." If the Jews, I say, have not disappeared in the dispersion, and Zionists are able to speak of a Jewish entity, it is not the result of the Jewish sword but of the spirit, still alive. To build up a new Jewish state with the sword is an anachronism. Jews all over the world are fighting on Armageddon's battlefields, and are shedding their blood, not with a view to conquests, but in defence of their adopted homes. As a matter of fact, they went out to fight not *because* they expected emancipation or a Jewish autonomous state as a reward, but they may expect reasonable human treatment all over the world, because they have been, and are, fighting the battles of civilisation. *Voila la différence!*"

Let the advocates of Jewish battalions conquering Palestine beware lest they put the share the Jews are taking in the war on a politic rather than a patriotic plane. The Jews, like the Christians, are simply doing their duty, and the true Jew does not expect a reward for his duty. As one of Israel's great sons, though excommunicated

by the Synagogue, said: "Beatitudo non est virtutis pretium, sed ipsa virtus." The Briton is not fighting Britain's battles because Greater Britain promised him the fleshpots of Egypt, nor is the Jew in the Allied armies fighting because *he* has been promised the vineyards and fig trees of Judæa.

No, if I may venture to make a suggestion, I say that it is right that all the non-naturalised Russian Jews in England should enlist because they owe a deep and everlasting debt of gratitude to England, the home of liberty, the champion of the downtrodden and oppressed, but let them ask to be sent to Flanders and France. Let them go and fight on the banks of the Somme instead of the Jordan; let them conquer Cologne and Berlin! Israel would then have done her duty in the cause of civilisation, and, I feel sure, civilised Christendom would not, *could* not, forget it. *Noblesse oblige.*

Such are my impartial convictions, and I am happy to state that such are also the sentiments, not only of British but also of Russian Jews—those mostly concerned in the matter. Russian Jews, who may claim the title of pioneers of the Russian Revolution, who have largely contributed to its triumph and to the overthrow of autocracy, could not belie their attitude of the past. They were bound to deprecate the idea of a Jewish regiment sent out to conquer Palestine for the Zionists, not only of Great Britain and America, but also for the Zionists of Germany, Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey. However, one of the gentlemen mainly responsible for the formation of a Jewish regiment for the object of conquering Palestine for the

Jews—as Jews—assured us that "there is nothing in the whole history of the present war to justify the apprehension of Germany or Turkey also forming a Jewish regiment and sending it to defend Palestine against the British invader and his Jewish regiment." [1] He felt quite convinced that Germany—the land of Kultur—was above such a trick! "It would have been very easy," he wrote, "for Germany to form battalions of Alsatians, to give them all the paraphernalia of 'national' regiments, and to send them against the French in order to show the world that Alsatians themselves opposed the re-annexation of Alsace by France. But Germany *did not try the trick*; on the contrary, she preferred to send her Alsatian soldiers to frontiers where they would meet other, not French, adversaries. Nor did Austria, with her Italian soldiers, or Turkey, with her myriads of Armenians, try the trick."

These statements are very interesting and illuminating, but I wonder if the writer has really measured the significance of his words. Let us read them attentively. In the first place this saviour of Judah reveals himself as a very *advocatus diaboli* (*diabolus* being equivalent in this case to Austria, Germany, Bulgaria and Turkey). The Central Empires and Turkey, he maintains, and he must have good cause for his emphatic declaration, are *above a trick*,[2] the very same trick which he was advising the Entente Powers to make

[1] Cf. *Jewish Chronicle*, August 17th, 1917, p. 15.

[2] Look up any dictionary and you will find the following definition of the word *trick*: "An artifice, a stratagem, an artful device, an *underhand* scheme, a vicious, foolish action or practice. Anything mischievous and roguishly done to cross and disappoint another.

use of, namely, to form a Jewish regiment so as to show the world that Jewry, as a national unit, is on the side of the Entente Powers. I am sorry I cannot share this gentleman's faith in the noble intentions of William Hohenzollern or his appreciations of Germany's fair play. I am rather inclined to think with President Wilson that "the Kaiser has never allowed himself to be stopped by any considerations of justice or pity," that "he has pulled down all the barriers of morality which he has met on his way." There is no reason to presume that what this modern Caligula has been guilty of in the past, he will hesitate to commit in the future, once it is in his interest to do so. He will only have as his excuse the power to say: "You tried it first!"

But the arguments of the *advocatus* of Kultur contain even more weighty and significant words, that affect not only the Kaiser and Kultur, but the Jews all over the world. "Nor can I believe," the instigator of a Jewish regiment told us, "that the German Jews would countenance such a trick." Again a certificate of nobility for German Jews, as distinguished from the Jews of the Entente Powers. The German Zionists would refuse "to fight against a régime friendly to Zionism for the conservation of an order of things forbidding Jews to colonise theHoly Land."[1] The "very idea seems to him to be preposterous." Now, if the German Jews are wielding such a mighty power in the land, and can either fight, or refuse to do so, as it pleases them, why then, I ask, did they not refuse to march against

[1] *Jewish Chronicle*, August 17th, 1917, p. 15.

Belgium; why did they lend their assistance to the invasion of that brave little country?

Moreover, this gentleman is evidently not aware that in his frankness he has "let the cat out of the bag" as far as he himself is concerned. It is very evident that for him the loyalty of the Jews to their respective countries is only *conditional.* It is the result of a bargain made with the Governments of the belligerent countries. They are on the side of the best bidder. The Zionists are on the side of the Entente Powers because the Entente Powers are not only going to be victorious, but also because they are friendly to Jewish national aspirations and will "secure the realisation of Zionism." And if it were not so—if for some reason or another the Entente Powers were *not* friendly to Zionism—then on which side would these advocates of Jewish regiments be? I wonder! Anyhow, I consider such statements and the issues they raise as a gross libel upon, and insult to, the hundreds of thousands of Jews who are fighting on Armageddon's battlefields *unconditionally*! The Jew, his whole history proves it, is never on the side of the victor because the latter *is* the victor, but because he represents justice, momentarily triumphant or not.

Let us suppose—a mere supposition—that the Central Powers had been victorious and that Turkey had maintained her power in the Holy Land, and that these victors had declared themselves favourable to the creation of a Jewish autonomous state in Palestine? Would these advocates be on the side of the victorious Central Powers or of the beaten Entente?—both animated by friendly intentions. As a matter of fact,

both the Central Powers and Turkey are now favourable to the idea of creating a Jewish autonomous state in Palestine, and even Djemal Pasha has changed his views on the subject.[1] It is also significant that the cry for a British Protectorate in Palestine was only raised by certain Zionists when the British troops were at Gaza and the probability of their entering Jerusalem became a certainty. Up till then the advocates were *silent*; they were biding their time, waiting until fortune had declared herself, and in the meantime they allowed the Lichtheims and Jacobsons to pull the strings.[2]

I could largely expatiate upon this question, and quote numerous passages from the Jewish press and the Zionist activity since August 1st, 1914, but in this chapter I am not dealing with Zionism, but with the Jews of Russia. Suffice it, therefore, to say that I merely wish to record my own humble but emphatic protest against, and deprecation of, those Jews who were advocating a Jewish battalion for the conquest of Palestine, and thus putting the share the Jews are taking in this world war on a politic rather than a patriotic plane.

These agitators, besides showing their manifest ignorance of the real Jewish spirit and its passionate attachment to justice, have rendered but little service to Judaism, or even to Zionism, which is, after all, an *internationally-national* movement. One feels even inclined to think that such agitators are, at the bottom of their hearts, not Zionists at all, as I understand the

[1] Cf. *Le Pays*, August 30th, 1917.

[2] *Ibid.*

movement, and as only a few Zionists seem to understand it.[1]

It is futile to attempt to reconcile sentiments and ideals which are in themselves antagonistic and cannot be reconciled. That is what some of the Jewish agitators are endeavouring to do: they maintain, on the one hand, that it is natural for Jews, as Jews, to fight for Jews (Jews in *all* belligerent countries I assume) getting Palestine,[2] whilst on the other hand they pretend that the Jews all over the world are loyal to their respective countries of adoption, or birth, and have the interests of these countries, which are necessarily antagonistic, at heart. For my own part, I fail to see how these two statements can be reconciled. One must choose between them. Either the Jews are a separate nation or they are not. If Israel be a separate nation, and all its scattered members—whether in belligerent or in neutral countries—constitute one national unit, then the Jews, to be logical with themselves, if they wish to have a commonwealth of their own in Palestine, must, first of all, consider the interests of their own nation, irrespective of the possible interests of any European Power. The announcement therefore of the British Zionists who proclaim *urbi et orbi*, now that Great Britain is victorious in Palestine, that they are anxious to have an autonomous state in the Holy Land as a British Protectorate, becomes a mere empty boast. Every loyal British citizen, whether Jew or Gentile, naturally prefers the Holy Land to

[1] We refer to men like Dr. M. Gaster, Dr. Daiches and the late Dr. Tshlenov.

[2] *Jewish Chronicle*, August 17th, 1917,

belong to Great Britain rather than to Turkey. There we are all Zionists, Jews and Gentiles.

If, on the other hand, the Jews all over the world are, first of all, loyal citizens of the countries of their birth or adoption and have the interests of these countries at heart, then it follows, logically, that the British Zionists who are anxious to have an autonomous state in Palestine under British protection, are certainly loyal British subjects, but that the Zionists in the Central Empires, *who agree to it*, are not loyal citizens of *their* countries. Far be it from me to blame them for it; but I cannot help observing that if citizens, *whilst enjoying citizen rights* in one country, are disloyal to it, they can hardly be trusted to be loyal to another. Again, they might endeavour to make the influence of the country of their birth predominant in their new home. This is the dilemma which men who try to reconcile antagonistic sentiments are consciously, or unconsciously, creating in the minds of impartial observers and students of history.

I may prove to have been a false prophet, but I certainly feel that a Zionism built, *ab ovo*, upon contradictory and even antagonistic principles may ultimately split upon the rock of Jewish loyalty and allegiance to the countries of their birth or adoption. Time will show. Anyhow, I cannot but applaud the attitude of the Russian Jews in Great Britain who declared that they were anxious to serve either as Russians or as Englishmen, but not as Jews. The Russian Jews, the pioneers of the Revolution, who have been suffering and fighting for freedom and justice against Tsardom and oppression, could not do otherwise. They are

now continuing to fight for the cause of justice, for the principles of democracy against German militarism. They have made *cause commune* with all the other defenders of democracy, no matter who makes the best bid to Israel, as a national unit or as an ethnic group.

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